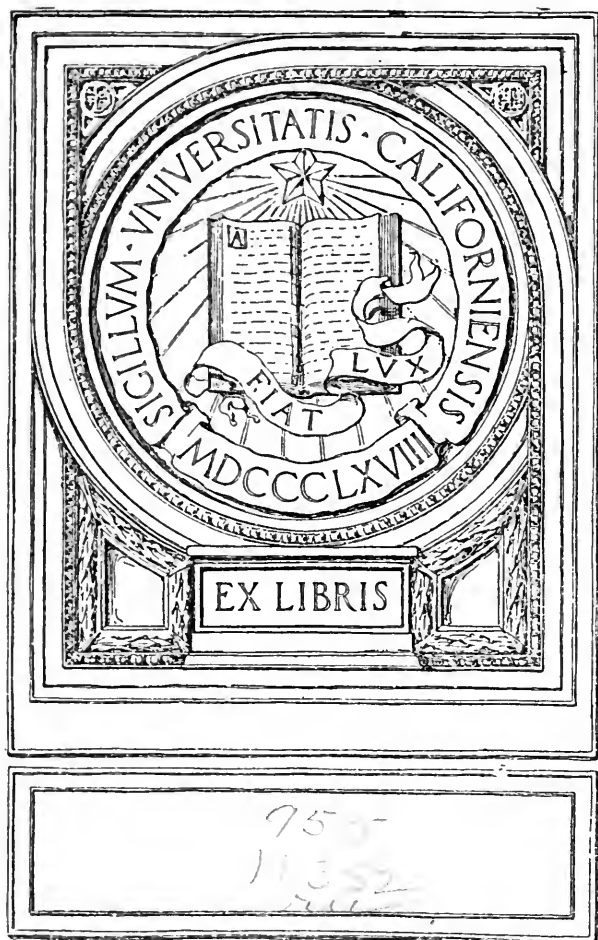




THE RUDDER

MARY S.
WATTS



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THE RUDDER

A NOVEL WITH SEVERAL HEROES

BY

MARY S. WATTS

Author of "Nathan Burke," "Van Cleve,"
"The Rise of Jennie Cushing," etc.

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THE RUDER
OF THE RIVER

THE RUDDER

A NOVEL WITH SEVERAL HEROES

CHAPTER I

OUR Middle Western States abound in what certain manufacturers of humorous epithet in other sections of the country have called with a gay and stingless opprobrium, "freshwater colleges." Of old — that is to say, about the fourth or fifth decade of the last century when most of them were founded — these institutions symbolised to the public mind not merely the advancement of learning, but its advancement by way of some particularly stiff, comfortless theological doctrine, and some mortally hard-bitten moral standards; so that even now the mature native of these parts involuntarily associates any freshwater college with Calvinism, Abolition, the temperance-pledge, and sizzling denunciations of pretty nearly every form of entertainment. I say involuntarily because the notion persists against our better knowledge; for, of course, all that has been changed. Nowadays they have forgotten all about *Uncle Tom's Cabin* and *Ten Nights in a Bar-Room*; they have fraternities, and dramatic clubs, and class dinners, and commencement-week parties and such-like vain so-

cial exercises even as do the saltiest of the salt-water establishments. Yes, you may read in this morning's paper how the Cambridge (Ohio) Wesleyan nine defeated the Thebes (Indiana) Baptist Brothers' four to three, the game going to eleven innings; and towards Thanksgiving Day when the football season is at its height, the colours of both Thebes and Cambridge are carried to victory on many a field of broken Wesleyan ribs and damaged Baptist noses. The old order has passed away before the vital necessity of being up to date.

Something like the above reflections went through the mind of Mr. Marshall Cook, that well-known man of letters, during his two hours' journey on the "Interurban," the morning of the hot June day on which by invitation he was to deliver the commencement address before and to the Cambridge undergraduates — class of '04 — the faculty of the college, and some scores of collegians' parents and friends. He had it in his satchel — fifty typewritten pages of humbug, to quote his own unsparing judgment, which he calculated could be stretched to occupy an hour, read with deliberation and allowing occasional pauses to point his statements, or for applause — here Mr. Cook grinned quite diabolically. If asked, he would have said that he did not expect to amuse or enlighten — the gift of amusing and enlightening is a rare one, and he had reasonable doubts about possessing it; at any rate, nothing of the sort, according to his experience, was wanted at a college commencement — and most assuredly none of those ribald comments about fresh-water and creeds and so on. No, he knew his duty. The speech must last an hour — anything of less length, even if packed with the wisdom of the ages,

would not be considered to earn the money — and it must be wrought entirely of sterling platitudes, recognisable at first sight, so that everybody would know how to receive them. It would be difficult, he thought sardonically, to get together a larger or better selection than that contained in his fifty-page manuscript; he was as sure of the applause as man can be of anything in this chance-ruled universe.

Perhaps his attitude of mind was not that of the college-man; and in fact, the eminent author had never gone to college, not even to Cambridge, although he was born — forty-odd years earlier — and had grown up in the same State, within a hundred miles. Now he surveyed the landscape with the not very profound interest its unimpressive comeliness would have roused in a stranger; it occurred to him ironically that this country of his birth was best known to him thus through a car-window, and that furthermore, dreadful to state, he had no desire to know it better. He had visited the city that was his old home only at wide intervals and for scarcely longer than a day or so at a time, during the last ten years. The “Interurban” lumbered along at a great rate, picking up as it advanced towards Cambridge, increasing numbers of nice-looking people about whom there was a gala and expectant air so pronounced that Cook presently passed from an approving wonder at the growth and enterprise of the population since his day to the conjecture that all these worthy pilgrims were bound to the commencement likewise, to see Thomas, Richard or Henry get his degree. There were automobiles, too, heading in the same direction; they could be seen all morning, spinning like mechanical toys on a white, dusty pin-stripe of road that paralleled the traction-

line at half a mile's distance — the Jeffersonville Pike, as Cook's seat-mate informed him.

"Oh, yes, of course! I remember it now!" the author ejaculated in sudden recognition. "I used to take bicycle rides out that way years ago. It was always a good road."

"They're saying all the roads will be made better now these motor cars have come — so many people'll be wanting a good road to ride on, you know," his neighbour remarked. "And that's a good thing anyways," he added with enthusiasm. "Good roads is a grand thing for the country entirely."

"— a gr-rand thing for the counthry intoirely," was what he really said; and the richness of this accent, the cast of the speech itself, taken with various other slight signs, such as his hearty colour, his long, strong, comic-cartoon jaw, his blunt nose and quick, bright blue eyes, sufficiently indicated his nationality — or at least his very recent descent — to Mr. Cook, who now looked at him for the first time, though they had been travelling in company since the car left town. The novelist also noted that his companion was heroically arrayed, regardless of the thermometer, in a new frock-coat and new light trousers of expensive cloth and cut, with shining new shoes on his rather prominent and unmanageable feet, with a huge seal-ring on the little finger of one of his heavy red fists, with a tie of the best quality of silk, brocaded in lively hues on a green background, and finally with a top-hat which, however, was manifestly almost too much for him to endure, notwithstanding his proved strength of mind and body. He had shoved it inelegantly backwards and sidewise, and

the crimson mark it had made showed on his forehead and even around the back of his honest bullet-head under the thin, grizzled-sandy hair. He met Cook's eye with an expression of tentative good-fellowship.

"Hot day," said the man of letters, prompted by the other's appearance.

"It is that! And the crowd makes it worse."

"Yes. Is it always this way, or is there something going on somewhere?" Cook asked experimentally, with the cunning of his trade. He had the name of being a photographically accurate student of character and manners, acquired, he would sometimes maintain, by the observance of a single simple rule, namely: make the other fellow talk!

In this case, the other fellow responded with gratifying willingness. He said sure there were going to be grand doings at the College up yonder at Cambridge, graduating exercises for the young men, the seniors, as they called um. They all got a paper, a cert'ficate like, to show they was all through and done with ut and in good standing. 'Twas give to um in style with speeches and music and all the lads' fathers and mothers and slathers of girls besides, only of course nobody was looking at *them*—he winked with a sidelong glance of vast roguishness—sitting in the seats and applauding. It beat everything how much the boys thought of them diplomys. They framed um and hung um up in the parlour. *He* said that for all the good that did um towards getting a job, it was like them signs the Board of Health puts up where there's measles or the like—"Keep Out"! He chuckled and fetched Cook a jog in the ribs with his elbow; then, on a second thought, explained with

some earnestness, that this unfeeling levity was "all put on."

"A young fellow'll be that solemn, you can't, for the soul of you, keep from teasing him a little. By the same token he'll find out there's some truth to the joke, as he goes along, poor boy!" he finished, with a dash of the truly Celtic underlying melancholy; and hauled out a mighty gold watch, and consulted it. "We're near there."

In fact, the brick tower of the city hall of Cambridge now showed intermittently between the hills and tree-tops, and though the road had not yet become a street, houses were thicker on both sides of it. The journey was almost over, Cook realised, privately bestowing a spirited anathema on his own indifference and want of diligence. Here he had been side by side with this gem of an Irishman for the better part of a whole morning, and had got nothing out of him! And the man was of a type ordinarily not easy for the inquisitive novelist to get at; he had a shrewd face, full of sense and character, and to have caught him in so expansive a mood was a real stroke of luck, recognised, alas, too late.

However, better late than not at all! "Got a boy up there yourself, I guess?" he suggested amiably; and was rewarded by an answer of unfathomable pride and satisfaction at once a little funny and a little touching.

"I have, sir. It's the four years' course he's taken in three, and him only twenty-one last January. He's to speak the—the vallydictorium speech, too. It seems that's a great honour, according to how the young fellows look at it—not that it means anything much to *me*," he interpolated, affecting a tolerant

disinterestedness. "Dad gets set back forty or fifty dollars for one of these black silk gowns and dinky little caps they've got to wear, besides all the rest of the foolishness — banquets and athaletics and all — everybody works but Father, hey?" He drew up one eye and the corresponding corner of his mouth humorously. "Looks like it was up to Father most of the time these days. I was for hiring the gown, myself — there's places where you can do that, and as long as Tim — I mean Chauncey — as long as the lad never wears it but the once, what's the differ? You'd have thought I'd insulted um just to hint at it! His mother was the worst. 'Look at all the money ye've spent already, fifteen hundred dollars if it's a cent!' she says. 'A little more won't be a drop in the bucket! And annyways,' she says, turning my own words against me, 'it's only once in a lifetime, and God knows ye don't want to grudge your son nothing, when ye'll never have the chance again!'"

"That's so!" said Cook with a warmth not wholly assumed, though, at the same instant, he was wondering ironically whether this brave fellow might not have many, many more chances to spend money on his boy. "She had you there!"

"She did! After that I'd nothing to do but hold my tongue and pay up like a man. Well, well, he'll maybe be handing that same gown on to his own son for him to graduate in, some day. That's more than my father could do for me — a whole lot more, as the kids do be saying in their slang talk. It was little enough school I had, leave alone college and commencements and swally-tail coats and black silk gowns and all." He gave a kind of humorous sigh. "Education's a grand thing, though, ain't it?"

"It is indeed, the greatest thing there is. Isn't your wife with you? Isn't she going to the commencement, too?"

"*Going*, is it?" echoed the other, much amused. "Is *she* going? As if you could head her off with dinnamite or a pick-axe! All the child she's got in the world! Yes, she's going. She's back there." He jerked a species of reversed nod towards the rear seats; and the car coming to a halt at that moment to take on another troop of commencement visitors, both men got up to accommodate some of the women passengers. They accomplished what was left of the trip squeezed between others in the aisle, and clinging to the straps; so that their exchange of confidences broke off abruptly, to the author's regret.

He promised himself to keep an eye out for Mrs. Irishman and for the valedictorian, the hero of the ceremonies, when the family should be united; but in the confusion of the final stopping-place, they escaped him. Indeed, they went out of his mind altogether. There was no station building at Cambridge; the "Interurban" merely stopped dead in the middle of the village main street, and incidentally of a considerable gathering of those nice-looking people whom Cook had previously remarked. They were now debarking from his own car and half a dozen more, lined up on the tracks and switch, and from the automobiles and innumerable horse-vehicles at the curb; and were being met by other nice-looking people in surprising force. Young men sprang up in squads; everywhere at least two girls bloomed where only one or none at all had bloomed before; the college pennant waved multitudinously; the college yell exploded regularly with magnificent vim and precision; and as the celebrity

himself set foot on the ground, a toy balloon striped with the college colours bumped lightly against his hat, knocking it over his eyes, and soared away. Somebody who was already shaking his hand, gave an exclamation of concern.

“Mr. Cook, I believe? — Oh, how annoying! — Where did that thing come from? — I’m so sorry, I’m sure it wasn’t intended — you see we’re in a great deal of excitement, of course — is your hat all right? My name is Chadwick — we’ve had some correspondence, you perhaps remember? It’s a very great pleasure to have you here, Mr. Cook; we were highly gratified when you consented to come. We turn this way — this young man is my son — Jimmie, take Mr. Cook’s bag. Oh, yes, you must really let him have it. I’m afraid James hasn’t read any of your work, Mr. Cook. His taste in literature runs just now to biographies of Black Bill, the Bandit Baron of Big Butte — hey, Jim? Ah-ha!”

Cook eyed the youngster, who stood before him, swinging the valise, reddening through his tan and freckles, diffident but refreshingly unimpressed. “‘An author by the river’s brim a simple author was to him’ — and so forth and so on,” said the visitor, with relish. “If I were only Mr. Christy Matthewson now —!” at which mildly satirical insinuation the father laughed inordinately. Master James turned a deeper red still, stood on one foot in order to tickle his ankle with the other, and at length remarked, “Aw!”

They cleared the crowd, and started off for Professor Chadwick’s house — moral philosophy was his chair, it presently developed — where there was to be luncheon and Mr. Cook would meet the Dean and

other members of the college staff. From almost any quarter of the little town you might see the campus; there were good old beech and linden trees, and a bronze fountain presided over by a representation of the founder, his watch-chain and whiskers done to the life, one hand resting upon an open folio, the other spread abroad in the gesture habitual (presumably) to all American public men of whom statues are erected. The stone buildings of the college were prettily draped with vines, ivy and honeysuckles and drooping purple panicles of wistaria; here were Central Hall, the Old Dormitory, the Library, Shelborne's, and so on — the professor pointed them out in turn. "Our stadium is down in that direction," he said, waving a hand; "you can't see it from here. It's considered to be very well equipped — cinder track, a football and baseball field, and all that sort of thing, you know, on quite a large scale. The Cothurnus gave their play there this year, because of the space and the general effect — it was *Julius Caesar*."

"That was a good selection — almost all male parts. The women are negligible."

Chadwick smiled. "In point of fact, they eliminated Portia and Calpurnia altogether! And even Mrs. Chadwick had to admit that the play got along perfectly smoothly without them. The boys did surprisingly well; it was really very good, especially the forum scene. Young Devitt, the young fellow that was Marc Antony, was quite rousing. Of course it's a great acting part, and I suppose nobody could entirely spoil those wonderful lines, but he did his 'honourable men' admirably. I thought we had turned up a histrionic genius, but it seems that he had seen the Ben Greet players, and modelled his Antony on

theirs — which showed some taste, if no originality. Devitt is one of our brightest men, however — took honours in English. He's very anxious to meet you; they all are, naturally."

Cook uttered a polite deprecatory murmur, wondering meanwhile if they had ever heard of him, and the other went on: "After the exercises, we always have a reception for the graduating class and their families. I hope you won't find it fatiguing. You say you just got in from the East this morning?" He accompanied this with an inquiring glance (of which he was probably quite unconscious) at the guest's neat toilette: Cook was a rather finicking little man.

"Yes, but I went to a hotel and had a general freshening-up — I'm not at all tired, thank you," he explained, not without inward amusement. "I was quite prepared for a hot, dusty, sooty trip. We all of us know what travel in this part of the country is like."

"Yes. It's not so bad when one is used to it. I'm from Wisconsin myself." Mr. Chadwick hesitated, then added with some civil curiosity: "I was under the impression that you had your home here still, Mr. Cook — in Cincinnati, I mean, of course. In fact, I'm quite sure we forwarded some mail to you there. I hope there hasn't been any mistake made about that — you went to a hotel —?"

"Oh, no, that's all right — I'll get it — it's quite safe, I'm sure, and probably of no importance anyway. Why, I used to live here — with my sister — a married sister and her family. She is dead now; but the rest of them are still here, and I expect to visit them — my nieces, that is — while I'm here. The name is

rather unusual — Maranda, you perhaps remember —? They live on the North Hill. I didn't go out there this morning — didn't want to disturb them so early — it's a household of women."

"I see. I was alarmed for a minute, figuring some invaluable manuscript going floating off around the country and finally bringing up at the Dead Letter Office! We have to cross here —"

It was a "stand-up luncheon"; Cook afterwards gave a very sprightly description of the same sort of function in his novel *Julia Denby's Career*, hitting off the Faculty and the Faculty's wives and daughters, and the coffee and sandwiches and little cakes and salad and ices, and the people who asked him what he was working at now, and the other people who told him of wonderful places to get "material" in that style of good-natured satire for which he had some reputation. "Brilliant studies of dulness" one critic had called his stories; and Cook himself used to make a quaint picture of his own mind running about, busily picking up and storing away unconsidered trifles which it later rummaged out, furbished up, and patched and pieced together into something serviceable, like any thrifty housewife in a garret. He did not know — so he said — whether this was a gift or a mere habit, but its activities, sometimes practical and sometimes not, were continually surprising himself.

"We're expecting a great treat this afternoon, Mr. Cook," one lady said to him with engaging earnestness. "Of course, it's like all the other good things in this life —"

"Best in anticipation?"

"No, no — why, how horrid! I meant it's only to

be won after we have done our appointed share of suffering in patience. You know we have to sit through the valedictory before we come to *you*."

"The valedictory?" said Cook alertly; and he was about to ask a question, when some one else spoke — one of the professors, as it happened.

"Sitting through *one* valedictory isn't such an ordeal," he said, stirring his cup with a reminiscent air. "Suppose you had to sit through three hundred and odd! That was what happened at my college up here at —" he named the place — "until a few years ago, when they mercifully suspended the practice. Every graduate had to make a speech in my time — only about ten minutes long, you know, but everybody had to have his say. It lasted two days or so. They took you in alphabetical order. All your family and friends were there, of course, from A to Andsoforth." He stirred again, and added without a smile: "My name is Wilson. I had a large audience — large, relatively speaking, that is. There was one man in the class named Zieloncka."

"Ah? He was all that was left of them — left of three hundred!"

"Just so, sir!" And here Cook was again about to ask his question, but the other again unwittingly intervened. "Nowadays the boys have just as much to do, and by the time Commencement week is over, we're all just as much exhausted, but in an entirely different way. I wonder if Mrs. Chadwick has any of the leaflets with the programmes left, the ones they give to visitors —? I should like Mr. Cook to see —" He looked about vaguely, but the supply of programmes seemed to have failed. However, young Mr. James Chadwick chanced to pass at that moment,

munching a sandwich, and being appealed to, halted obligingly.

"Yep. I got one — only you can't have it for keeps, because I want it myself," he said, crammed the last bite into his mouth, and fished out a document at sight of which the lady gave a dainty exclamation.

"Oh, *Jimmie*! Couldn't you get Mr. Cook a clean one? That's dreadful!"

Jimmie divided a glance of masculine impatience between the other two. "I ain't going to *give* it to him anyway. He just wants to *know*, that's all," said he; and opened the leaflet, and pointed with a stubby little grimy forefinger. "That's the track events. That's what you wanted, didn't you? The reason it looks mussed up is I wrote all the fellows' names that won, you know, and it was a blue indelible pencil and some soda-water got spilled on it afterwards so the blue kind of ran all over it, but you can read 'em still," he explained seriously and confidentially to Cook's thorough delight.

"Oh, yes, easily," said the latter with equal gravity, following Jimmie's Isabella-hued finger-nail. "The hundred-yard dash was won by a man named Stokes, I see."

"No, that's Stone. Watch out for the creases, or she'll come in two! That's Putting-the-Shot next — Loring got that — Amzi Loring II — see? He's a big fellow; he plays left field on the team — not the *class* team, the *college* team. I guess he's going into professional ball —"

"Incidentally Loring is one of our graduates to-day, Mr. Cook," said Wilson drily; "a very great ornament to the class, as you may infer."

"Don't you think your mother may be needing you,

Jimmie?" the lady suggested; "you can leave your programme with Mr. Cook." She had been, to say the truth, grievously disillusioned by this small episode. "I supposed of course he would be interesting, or at least, *different*," she said afterwards in intimacy; "but ever so many of the literary people I've met have been rather commonplace. Isn't it queer?"

"Just a minute, Jimmie," the disappointing person now said. "Tell me about some of these others. What's all this, for instance?"

The leaf he had turned was in tolerable condition and unpencilled. Jimmie craned over to inspect it. "Oh, *that*! That isn't anything — it just tells what they're going to do to-day," he announced. And sure enough, Cook read:

Invocation
By THE DEAN

Music

Oh, holy day, oh, happy day!.....*Standish*
Quartette and chorus for male voices

CAMBRIDGE COLLEGE CHOIR

Valedictory Address
T. CHAUNCEY DEVITT

Cook paused. "Chauncey" and "Devitt"! His housewife's memory groped an instant, then triumphantly pounced upon and dragged forth all that he had overheard concerning those two names. "Chauncey" — he actually remembered the father's "Tim — I mean Chauncey —" was of course the valedictorian, but he was in all probability Marc Antony, too.

"Well, now, this is interesting," he said to Professor Wilson. "I was just about to ask you the valedictorian's name —" and he gave the other some account of the acquaintance he had scraped that morning.

Chadwick came up to them and listened and nodded his head at the last.

“I’ve never met Devitt’s family — I understand the father is a road-contractor — a superintendent of road-building, or something of that sort,” he said vaguely. “I daresay he — er — came up from the ranks, as so many do — a self-made man. That’s the best product of our civilisation — eh, don’t you think so? I dislike to hurry you, Mr. Cook, but we must start presently. Whenever you’re ready —?”

As they began to move, Wilson said, “You’ll meet Devitt senior again this afternoon, Mr. Cook, and what then? I tremble for you. He’ll regard you as a kind of literary confidence-man, won’t he?”

“I doubt very much if he recognises me,” said the author serenely. “He’ll be too much taken up with his wonderful, splendiferous, valedictorying son. Do you know the young man?”

“Oh, yes, of course. I had him in Romance Languages. A prodigious grind. I’ve seen brighter men, but I never saw any man work harder. Industry is a good deal more welcome to the average teacher than cleverness — not that either commodity is very abundant! Of course I don’t mean to say that young Devitt is dull — not at all! I only mean he’s not so bright as some of the other men that haven’t done nearly so well. That’s a contradiction that one often meets with in a class-room. The tortoises are forever outstripping the hares. No calamitous sense of humour to get in the way, and interfere with serious study, you know; no foolhardy seeking after novelty —” He wound up his half-ironical words with a descent into slang. “Give me the tortoises every time!”

"Somehow or other 'T. Chauncey' doesn't sound to me at all bright," said Cook. "'T. Chauncey'—eh?" He fixed a quizzical eye on the other, who shrugged.

"Oh well! A very young man, you know —"

But Cook was unappeased. "'T. Chauncey' is altogether too stylish," he said solemnly, shaking his head, and Wilson himself laughed unwillingly.

Later, on the platform in Central Hall, before the embanked faces, while the organ purred low and melodiously and the graduates filed in two by two in their newly mounted regalia black and flowing and rustling gravely, Cook felt a sudden sense of levity rebuked. Good Heaven, he thought, what pain, what toil, what sacrifice, what anguish of doubts and hopes, what pathetic faith, those rows on rows of fathers and mothers embodied! And what defenceless ignorance, what pitiful cocksure egotism and ambition and heart-breaking confidence these poor bedecked lads! He stood with the others, bowing his head during the prayer, and thinking: "I would not say those things. I would not beseech the Almighty for grace or help; I'd ask Him just to give the boys a little luck. It makes no difference how great a young man's endowment, or how good a start he gets, we've all got to have a little luck to weather it through." Perhaps he did put up some such simple petition for them, remembering his own youth, and a hundred shabby mistakes; and sat down not a little moved. Nobody else was, apparently, in the slightest degree, he observed, glancing around the semi-circle of professors; nothing to get maudlin over from their breadwinners' point of view, Cook reminded himself, regaining his normal mood. While the quartette and chorus thun-

dered holiness and happiness from somewhere to the rear of the stage, he searched for his Irishman, and ere long discovered him looming very big on a front seat, with his fists planted squarely on his knees, radiating content, a sight to warm the heart. Alongside was another person whom Cook identified without any trouble as the mother, terrifically corseted, conscious, unsmiling, much more sophisticated and conventional than her husband, whose appearance and behaviour, the author guessed, were giving her gnawing anxieties. She whispered to him, and Mr. Devitt, bending down painfully, bestowed his silk hat (which he had informally hung over the arm of the chair) in the holder underneath; anon she whispered again energetically, and he got out a vast handkerchief and diligently exercised it on his chin and short, projecting moustache; once more she whispered, and he obediently readjusted himself, sitting rigidly upright, and straightening his cuffs, his tie, his waistcoat under her exacting eye. Cook fancied he saw in the pantomime, joined to what he already knew of them, a complete register of this couple's married life, of their individual characters and aspirations. Again he sharply regretted his negligence that morning. "I might have met the wife too, if I had had my wits about me!" he lamented inwardly. "Now it's all off! The minute she knows I'm 'Mr. Cook, the author,' she'll mount guard. It was a chance in a thousand. That family is a whole text-book with illustrations — son and all, very likely."

Upon the instant, he became aware with a start that the music had ended, that even the applause was tapering off, and that the valedictorian was already on his feet, in a pose by the little table with the classic

tumbler of water on it, about to begin. The novelist looked at T. Chauncey hard, finding himself unexpectedly impressed. Young Devitt did not at all resemble either parent; on the contrary, he was slight and tall with a shock of black hair, cavernous black eyes, a sallow face hectically touched with colour just now, and a general appearance of ill-health about which there was something singularly dramatic. When he moved he limped perceptibly, without somehow suggesting either deformity or injury, only suffering borne with fortitude, put out of mind by sheer resolution. That or some other indefinable quality about his tense presence brought before the mind the figure of Genius as most of us conceive it, ruthlessly self-subduing, burning out body and soul on some altar of high endeavour. The fancy was ratified, as it were, by the detachment of his manner; he made his address from memory in a fine, clear, resonant voice, composedly, but without any sort of forwardness or undue assurance. It was as if he thoroughly realised his position of untried youth preaching at its elders, but was too much in earnest about what he had to say to make any bids for tolerance or sympathy. The audience paid him the tribute of genuine attention, and there was nothing perfunctory in the long roll of applause at the end; it was charged with real interest, real admiration which the young man accepted with the same strikingly serious-minded and single-hearted air, bowing gravely and taking the laurel wreath which some one handed to him over the edge of the stage, and returning to his chair with his halting step, unobtrusively significant.

“He did very well, don’t you think?” Wilson remarked in the author’s ear, under cover of the next

musical selection. "One was never in momentary terror of his breaking down. Nothing epoch-making about the speech, to be sure — in fact, without Shakespeare and the Bible and a few minor reservoirs of quotation, I don't know where the speech would have been!"

"Without them, nobody knows where any speech would be!" said Cook grimly. It was his turn next.

". . . It belongs to our later years and to our wider vision of life to discover that . . ." etc. ". . . To you young men, I preach no supine nor spiritless policy when I say that we must all inevitably encounter some unendurable circumstances that must nevertheless be endured, some intolerable conditions that must whether or no be tolerated. It is our part not to struggle under the trial, any more than to seek to evade it; rather let us carry it if we must, emerge from it if we may, with our greatest care to possess ourselves in spiritual freedom, unbroken and undishonoured . . ." etc. ". . . In the words of Seneca's pilot: 'O Neptune, you may save me if you will, you may sink me if you will, but come what may, I will hold the rudder true!'"

Thus — and with a good deal more in the same vein — did Mr. Cook discourse for his appointed hour, and received his meed of applause at the close with the wary and good-humoured cynicism in which he had trained himself. The end of any speech was always welcome, he would say; this time he added mentally, smiling at his own conceit, that really that peroration was very neat — it would scarcely have been possible to pick out anything neater or more appropriate to the occasion! And, in fact, he was repeatedly assured of this afterwards when numbers of people came and

complimented and thanked him, and told him how illuminating his words had been.

This was during the reception which took place on the platform immediately after the conferring of the degrees, and after the Cambridge College Choir had performed for the final time (*Alma Mater, Hail and Farewell!*) their song merging into the Doxology. The next moment everybody was in motion; the chairs and benches scraped thunderously; there was much hand-shaking, some kissing, some furtive shedding of tears, an exchange of felicitations between parents, teachers, pupils. In the middle of it all, the graduates were brought up for introduction, one after the other, and Professor Wilson, to whom the office had fallen, presently said: "Mr. Cook, you remember our honour man, I'm sure?" And Cook shook hands with his fellow-orator, making a light reference to their fellowship.

"*Arcades ambo!* — eh?" said he. "I was in a miserable panic, weren't you?"

"No, I was not frightened," said the dark youth gravely, fixing his profound black eyes on Cook with an interest so intense as to be rather disconcerting; it aroused in the latter a vivid feeling of protest. "Good Lord, my dear young man, don't take me so seriously!" he wanted to cry out. But it was obvious that young Devitt was taking everything and everybody, including himself, with abysmal seriousness.

"I was not frightened," he repeated.

"And you spoke from memory too. I never could have done that in the world."

"Now you are jesting," said T. Chauncey, with a solemn smile. "That was very wonderful what you said at the last — the pilot's words —" he quoted in

his deep, rolling voice: “‘*Come what may, I will hold the rudder true!*’ That was wonderful and beautiful.”

“I trust you noticed that it was also not original,” the author said. “I thought it would make a hit with this audience,” he added, profanely and recklessly experimenting according to his habit.

The experiment was not a success. Young Devitt did indeed for one instant look somewhat puzzled and dubious, so that Cook had hopes of having shocked him into something like natural speech and behaviour; then his face cleared. He eyed the author with the same uncomfortable intensity, and said again: “You are jesting.” He paused. “Are you working now, Mr. Cook?”

“I work more or less all the time,” said Cook patiently.

“All the time? Yes, I suppose you have to, so as to keep a grip on your style. That’s the way all great geniuses do. I always read everything you write. I think the humour in your stories is marvellous —”

“Thank you. I’m glad you like them. Are your father and mother here, Mr. Devitt? I should like to meet them,” the author interposed hastily. He had been aware, all the while, of the father and mother standing by their chairs, quite alone; no one seemed to know them; no one had spoken to them except a professor’s wife here and there; facts which had no effect on the elder Devitt in his beaming mood, but Mrs. Devitt’s air was both downcast and angry — angry to the verge of tears, as Cook was sharp enough to perceive. To do him justice, it was as much a certain humane sympathy as his curiosity that prompted

him. "I'd like to know your father and mother," he said, sincerely.

The young man glanced carefully in every direction except the right one. And now the colour flushed his sallow face, he hesitated, he stammered: "Ye-yes, they're here — they — they — they don't care anything for society — they don't go into society at all, hardly — not at all — I don't know where they are just now —" he repeated his wretched pretence of gazing all around in search of them. "I do believe they've run off somewhere — I'll have to hunt them up — they don't care for society at *all* —" He was natural enough now, alas! The spectacle of him moved Cook with contempt and amusement and an understanding pity.

Luckily for all parties concerned, perhaps, the episode went no further, for Wilson interrupted just then with another introduction. "Ah, Mr. Cook? This is Mr. Amzi Loring — er, *Two*, isn't it? Mr. Amzi Loring *Two* — Second, you understand, Mr. Cook. The class poet." And hereupon Cook shook hands with a huge, high, wide young bruiser with an under-shot jaw (so the author catalogued him) who, for his part, grunted "Huh!" scowling helplessly at both of them. Wilson escaped with a Puck-like grin.

"Pardon me, did you say the class poet?" inquired Cook.

Mr. Amzi Loring Two reiterated his first remark. "Huh!" said he; "I'd look nice writing poetry, wouldn't I?" He remained glowering down at the little man, clumsy but unembarrassed, profoundly bored and making no slightest attempt to conceal it.

"Well, this *is* a child of Nature!" thought the au-

thor; and memory serving him handily once more, he said: "Loring? You won in some of the athletic events, I think?"

"Yeah."

Cook tried again. "I met a man once that was about your size, and his business was selling chocolate-creams —"

"Huh?" Amzi Two smiled! "Chocolate-creams, huh?" His face could not be said to light up — no emotion, Cook fancied, could make him look other than a big brute — but the gaze he bent on the author was at least more attentive. "Chocolate-creams!" He chuckled raucously.

"It doesn't seem a man's-size job any more than writing poetry, hey?" Cook volunteered further.

"No." After a moment's consideration, during which he scanned the author's meagre proportions quite openly and coolly, he said: "Size hasn't got anything to do with it, of course. I know *that*. But I haven't got any use for poetry, anyhow. It's all right for *you*, I guess."

"I guess it is," said Cook soberly. "Or for a man like Devitt now, your valedictorian —"

"Some noise, wasn't he?" said Loring; and looking down on Cook, to the latter's bottomless astonishment, he deliberately drooped one eyelid in Brobdignagian mockery. Before the author could recover, the young fellow followed up this unexpected mark of confidence by saying more confidentially still: "Say, I know your niece, Miss Maranda."

"Indeed?"

"Yeah. I don't mean Fannie — I mean Nellie, the pretty one, you know. She's your niece, isn't she?"

"Yes. Her sister Fannie is my niece, too."

"Huh? Ho, ho — she's your niece, too, is she? — Hey? Ho-ha!" Cook said to himself that never did a more inexpensive witticism meet with greater appreciation! Young Loring chuckled and chuckled. He looked at the author with flattering friendliness; he became loquacious, expansive: "That's what I like about Nellie Maranda. She can say the brightest things. She isn't anybody's fool if she is pretty. Most of 'em are, you know," he said. "I just happened to remember just now that you were her uncle — the one that wrote, that is. I'd forgotten all about you," he explained tactfully. "I live near her — the North Hill just off of Adams Road. That's my father over there. Here, I'll get him."

He shouldered off, leaving Cook with the thought that here was one boy who was not ashamed of his family, at any rate. The Devitts, father, mother and son, had disappeared. Wilson rejoined him, remarking blandly: "I suppose you had a sharp passage of wits with Loring Two, Mr. Cook?"

"What I want to know is: how under Heaven did that young man ever get through college?" Cook said. "Was he too valuable in — er — in athletic circles to be dropped? Of course it's insulting to hint at such a thing, but in confidence now, was that it?"

The other waved a cool gesture. "How should I know? Athletic prestige is not to be undervalued by any college these days, it's true. Is he bringing his father? By the way, the father, Amzi *One*, is a prominent citizen. I should have thought you would remember him. He's the Loring they call the Ice-King — *now* don't you remember?"

"The Ice-King?" echoed Cook hazily. And then he found himself being presented not to a Santa-Claus-

looking individual wreathed in white cotton-batting and diamond-dust as the title suggested, but to a prosperous, middle-aged gentleman suitably clad, who shook his hand cordially, calling him Mr. Brooks, and observed that it was very hot, but only what was to be expected at this season of the year.

"You haven't got any kick coming because it's hot," said young Amzi, and winked at Cook again. "Dad can't ever get his mind off of business." He quoted the refrain of a ditty popular at that date, "'How would you like to be the ice-man? I don't know!'" And at this rich piece of humour, he laughed and the elder man laughed so uproariously that people standing near jumped and stared at them. Cook laughed with even keener enjoyment than the others, though (it is possible) not entirely for the same reason. He was often accused of "lifting" his characters bodily from life, and as often solemnly denied it. "No profit in it," he would aver; "truth is so much stranger than fiction that you can't make it plausible." And it is a fact that for that or other reasons, no one at all resembling the two Lorings ever appeared in any of his novels, not even in that famous chapter of *Julia Denby's Career*, although you might have supposed they would offer ideal "material."

CHAPTER II

MR. COOK returned on the "Interurban" as democratically as he had come, and unrecognised amongst the crowd, notwithstanding the conspicuous rôle he had played in the afternoon's proceedings. He was not the man to be cast down by this neglect, however — quite the contrary; the lack of personal distinction he sincerely considered one of his best assets, it was of so much use in "making the other fellow talk." The little author looked so safe, harmless, ordinary — "And in fact I *am* perfectly safe, harmless and ordinary," he would have said with his dry smile. On this occasion he fell in with a couple of nice lads, friends going through college together; they would graduate next year, they told him, and were led to chatter eagerly and frankly about their plans which involved New Mexico, South Africa, the Klondike, they were not yet certain which. One of them meant to be a mining engineer, and the other was taking some sort of electrical construction course in "Tech," he said, adding: "You see Bill and I are expecting to kind of do team-work." And he nodded brightly at Cook, confidently supposing himself understood. Neither of them knew Mr. Amzi Loring or T. Chauncey Devitt, to Cook's disappointment; he had hoped to discover some new point of view of those two celebrities. But in any case these boys allowed themselves no personal opinions; they looked upon everybody and everything connected with

their college with the same loyal and unreserved enthusiasm.

They reached the city at last, in a hot, sticky dusk. Cook worked his way out of his carful of people briskly enough, but he paused on the curb, hesitating. The very air felt tired; newsboys were squawking the baseball extras; the evening crowds were just starting homeward, every car grinding by fringed with men. One would not have thought the street-corner a pleasant place to linger; the North Hill, with its comparative coolness and quiet would seem to the casual judgment much more attractive; yet, for some reason Mr. Cook appeared to be in no hurry to gain that haven. In point of fact, he was thinking in a gross, unæsthetic fashion which would have shocked admirers of his genius, why not dine down-town? Why not get a room down-town, for that matter? *Must* he stay out at the house? Couldn't this thing be compromised somehow with a visit — a nice visit of a couple of hours, say — a nice, agreeable talk — wouldn't that do? He was afraid it wouldn't do. He didn't want to hurt any one's feelings — might as well go through with it — might as well get it done and over with, as long as he was here — and at this stage he was interrupted by a large presence at his elbow, familiarly accosting him.

"Hello!" it said; "here you are! Say, where'd you go to? I lost you in the shuffle up there right at the end when everybody was good-bye-ing. We wanted to bring you along with our crowd. We had a special. Take you out to the Hill now, if you like, in the machine. Take both of you. Your niece is here."

It was Amzi Two again, six feet of him, grinning

with his undershot jaw, like an amiable — a temporarily amiable — bulldog, bewilderingly friendly, and so big that Cook's mind for the moment could take in nothing but this bigness. "I don't see how I ever missed you!" he involuntarily ejaculated.

"I told you. We had one of their special cars — you can charter 'em from the Traction Company. We were right behind you all the way. There she is," said the other, nodding towards a resplendent conveyance, all maroon paint, polished nickel rods, plate-glass windows and wicker chairs of which, sure enough, Cook remembered to have caught glimpses trundling in the rear on the way down. Indeed, it had been not only striking to the eye, but vociferously so to the ear also, what with tin horns, megaphones, the college yell, and so on. It stood empty now, the motorman lounging over his helm. Cook stared, not quite understanding.

"Thank you very much for thinking about me," he said precisely. "The house isn't on the car-line, though, so I can't accept —"

"Wake up!" said Amzi Two in rough and impatient jocularity. "I don't want to take you in *that*. Our machine's here. I told you that before. The shuff's got it across the street in front of the drug-store — see it? The big red one — the Packard. There's Dad talking to Miss Maranda. She's waving to you now. Come on!"

He seized the author's valise in one muscular grasp, the author's elbow in the other, and had them both well under way before the last words were out of his mouth. Cook submitted. The only thing, he thought, that could be more ridiculous than a little man being carted across the street by a big man, was

the same little man getting into a bad temper about it. And this young lout meant well, no question of that, though what it was in himself that had found such marked favour with Amzi Two was a matter of mystery to Cook. He acquitted both Lorings of the sort of snobbery that delights in exhibiting an intimacy with people of his profession; that would be more in T. Chauncey's line, the author said to himself shrewdly. But these two men — ! It was hard to believe that either father or son had ever read anything but the daily paper in his life; poems or pumps, stories or shoe-polish, it was all one to them how their new friend made a living. "They love me for myself alone!" Cook decided with inward laughter.

On the other side of the street there stood the great, flaring automobile which the "shuff" was just now engaged in cranking; the "shuff" was another stalwart individual with a uniform of imposing smartness. Everything about the Lorings was large and opulent; their single group overshadowed all else in sight, the drugstore, the crowd, the incessant newsboys, the dray laden with barrels on one hand, the humble livery-stable coupé on the other. Loring senior in his natty light waistcoat was chatting with a tall young lady in a white dress and hat, who, in her different way, was not the least distinguished figure of the whole distinguished scene. Cook realised it with a fresh surprise, as if the delicately high-coloured brunette face she turned towards him had been that of some stranger instead of his own near kinswoman. "I forget in between times how pretty Nellie is," he was thinking as he greeted her. "Well, Nellie!"

She came up and put her hand in his with a very

simple, correct air of enthusiasm and affection mingled in careful proportions, not too much of either, the place being too public for that. There was nothing pleasingly girlish about it, but in fact, Miss Maranda must have been about twenty-five years old, and gave an instant impression of social experience and thoroughly reliable manners. "Well, Uncle! Are you nearly worn out?" she said in smiling sympathy; and included the others with: "He's been away from here so long he can't be hardened to the sight of the thermometer in the nineties any more."

Loring One took the elderly man's privilege of staring at her with open admiration; Loring Two reddened under her casual eyes like any schoolboy. He looked as if he must be red to his very heels — no slight distance! Whatever this would indicate it was not embarrassment as might have been supposed, for he spoke directly with authoritative ease.

"It'll be cool riding. There's always a breeze. Here, put this in, Garry," he brusquely commanded the chauffeur, passing him Cook's bag. And, overlooking her quick gesture of protest, he went on to Miss Maranda in a tone scarcely less brusque: "Get in front. You get in front, and I'll drive."

"Why, that's so kind of you, Mr. Loring, but I —"

"Hold up, son!" interposed the older man. "The young lady was just explaining to me —"

"We can't, you know, Mr. Loring — I'm so sorry! You see I came down to meet Mr. Cook —"

"I wouldn't have had you do it in this prostrating heat, Eleanor," began this last; "if Mr. Loring wants —"

Young Amzi's heavy voice cut all the civilities short.

As an exhibition of force and directness it suggested his performances at putting the shot. "What's the matter? Why can't you?" he bluntly demanded of the girl.

"Because I've a 'hack' here already," said Nellie, laying a humorous stress on the word; and she waved her hand, grimacing piquantly, towards the coupé, the driver of which, taking the gesture for a signal, clucked to his horse and moved up along the curb. "Here he comes now. It's for you, Uncle Marshall. Mrs. Maranda ordered it for you."

"Mrs. Maranda? For *me*!" repeated Cook; and now it was his turn to change colour, inexplicably; the flush crept slowly up over his thin hatchet-face. "Mrs. Maranda sent it for me?"

"She *would* do it, you know," said his niece defensively as their eyes met.

There was an infinitesimal pause — infinitesimal, yet somehow long enough to be marked, uncomfortable. Cook spoke hurriedly in an ineffectual attempt to cover it up. "That was very nice of — of your mother," he said, fumbling the last word a little, perhaps annoyed at his inability to conceal annoyance. In a second he had recovered, however, and added smoothly enough: "You see how it is, Mr. Loring. I'm overwhelmed with hospitalities which I'm afraid I don't at all deserve! If one could only do two things at once —"

Young Loring came down again like a well-aimed bludgeon. "Bosh!" he ejaculated freely. "Send the rig back to the stable, and you come along with us. Horses are so dead slow, it makes me tired to look at 'em."

Cook, now quite master of himself, adjusted his

features to an expression of polite helplessness. "If one could only be in two places at once —" he murmured.

"Guess you'll have to give up, son," said the Ice-King, good-humouredly. But the younger man seemed himself to have already come to that decision. He uttered a single brief comment: "Huh!" and hustled them over to Mrs. Maranda's "hack" with the not-too-gentle promptness and vigour apparent in most of his actions so far. He shoved them both in, slammed the door, said to Nellie: "I'll 'phone you this evening, if I don't come over," said to the driver, "'s all right, George!" and was back climbing into his own vehicle, all in one breath! Garry manipulated the wheel; the automobile moved off majestic as a freight-locomotive and not far from the same size. The last Cook and the girl saw of them, Loring the son was lighting a long, large, dark cigar in the shelter of his father's hat, which the latter gentleman obligingly held for that purpose; they vanished around the corner with an aroma of gasoline streaming like a pennant in their rear. The hack, following at its sober pace, lost sight of them almost at once.

"Tremendously energetic young man!" said Cook, with a half laugh. "In fact, I should say he was all energy and not much else! Who are they, Nellie? Somebody new? Since the last time I was here, I mean."

"Why, no — not exactly. They've always lived here. Mr. Loring's father — the *old* Mr. Loring — is the one they call the Ice-King. I think they used to live somewhere down town. But now they've bought that great, big place of the Hendersons — you remember where the Hendersons lived —?"

The author nodded. "Any Mrs. Loring?" he inquired.

"No. The two men live there by themselves — a whole tribe of servants, of course. They've done a great deal to the place. It's quite gorgeous now."

Cook gave an amused exclamation. "Gorgeous in whose taste? Did Amzi senior or junior direct the alterations?"

"Neither one of them," said the girl, laughing too, though constrainedly. "They knew better than to try, and got architects and decorators. They're not such Philistines as you think, Uncle Marshall," she added, with a certain warmth.

"I don't mind Philistines," said Cook with another laugh, protesting indirectly against her indirect accusation. For the next moment he was bending all his energies to lighting a cigarette — he never smoked cigars; they made him sick — and spoke brokenly, between inhalations. "I don't ask your leave, Nellie — you smoke them yourself — so it can't offend you —" He had it going, threw away the match, and blew out a mouthful of smoke, through which he said casually: "How long have you known the Loring's yourself? The young one seemed to consider himself quite intimate."

"Oh, a year or so — I don't remember where I met him first — playing tennis, I believe it was. He played in the tournament last summer. He knows all the men and girls in the club, of course," Nellie said carelessly, and therewith abandoned young Loring. "Now tell me about yourself, Uncle Marsh. Oh, I'm not going to ask you any of those questions you hate so," she interrupted herself quickly, reading his face. "I mean what kind of a day did you have?"

Was it interesting at the Commencement? Or just *bore-ious*?"

"Why, everything's always interesting, more or less, you know," the novelist declared. "Nobody ever needs to be bored, I think." He gave her some account of the day's doings, to which Nellie showed herself a bright and accommodating listener.

"'T. Chauncey!'" she repeated at one point, with incredulous relish. "Oh, come now, Uncle Marsh, you made that up! That's too good to be true!"

"Not I! That's just *it*! I couldn't have made up anything half so good. T. Chauncey was his name."

"Did he live up to it?"

"Capitally — as far as stage presence goes, that is," said Cook, recalling his first impression of the young man; "he looked like Lord Byron!"

"And talked like John Smith, I suppose?"

"Exactly. However, there must be *something* in him. People sometimes seem to feel some queer kind of handicap, talking to me — they're a little affected — seem to have it too much on their minds that I'm 'littery.' I fancied that was what was the matter with him, though he had a great air of self-possession." Cook paused, frowning meditatively. "T. Chauncey was not without personal force — magnetism, if you choose. You felt it even when he was reciting his banalities. There must be *something* in him," said the author again with conviction. He went on with his tale, ending with: "The whole thing was interesting. I don't quite know what to make of him."

"Well, *I* do! I think he was disgusting to feel that way about his old father and mother that had done everything in the world for him!" said Nellie. Her

dark face flashed. "Disgusting!" she ejaculated again with generous vehemence. Cook, observing her, said to himself that it was as if she had forgotten her conventional creed, dropped for one second her invisible shield of manners, and stood forth the real woman, spirited and impulsive. She herself must have been aware of it, for meeting his scrutiny, she coloured and laughed and bit her lip. "Not that I need to excite myself over it!" she said lightly. "He's not the only person in the world that's ashamed of his relatives, I daresay."

"One in every family," said Cook, shrugging. "And the truth is, every family has some members it's ashamed of. I myself — I've had to walk down street with sundry gentlemen and ladies that I'd have given a good deal not to be seen with!"

"Meaning *me*?" said Nellie, sparkling. She gave his arm a little shake, affectionate and teasing. It was another of her unruly impulses, as Cook saw with the thought that whether they were of any significance or not, they had a certain heady charm, and became her well. He cocked his head to one side, and eyed her all over in exaggeratedly critical appraisal.

"Oh, I don't know!" he drawled loftily; they both laughed.

"You and I always do get along, don't we, Uncle Marsh?" said the girl. Even with the words her face that had been so gay suddenly clouded. Perhaps Cook's own expression changed. They fell silent. The carriage laboriously climbed the hill, and turned into Paradise Park. It was skirting the reservoir before either of them spoke again.

"I should have asked before this — er — how is Mrs. Maranda?" Cook said at last, almost with for-

mality. "I took it that she was well — that is, as well as usual — or I should have heard."

Nellie answered with equal stiffness; they might have been two distant acquaintances exchanging perfunctory civilities about another distant acquaintance. "Thank you, Uncle Marshall, she is about the same. Of course she doesn't get out at all — she can't go anywhere, but otherwise she seems to be as strong as anybody. The doctor says she is."

"Well — er — is there much nursing?"

"No," said Nellie, looking straight ahead; "she is not really sick, you know. She never has any pain. If one may judge by eating and sleeping, she is perfectly well. Of course she has to have some attention." She paused. "Fannie does almost everything for her."

Cook made a movement. "That is not at all necessary," he said in a chilly voice; "I have repeatedly told Fannie, and told Mrs. Maranda that that wasn't necessary. It ought to be perfectly possible to get some person — a maid or somebody —"

"Mrs. Maranda says that another servant would upset the house too much, and she doesn't want to put us to so much inconvenience," said Nellie impersonally, as if she were repeating a lesson. "She says that she feels just as if we were her own children, and she knows we feel the same towards her as we would towards our own mother; she knows that we love to take care of her. Besides, she says that we all know it's our duty not to lay the expense of another maid on you, and we can't think of accepting it from you — I beg your pardon, Uncle Marshall? You said —?"

"Nothing — nothing," said the other hastily. Nellie resumed in the same resolutely colourless fashion.

“She says that she would gladly give us more towards the expenses of the house — she would gladly pay more than her share (she says) but she has all she can do now — she has so many people to take care of — people who are really needier than Fannie and myself, and have more claim on her —”

“Homer and his family, of course — I understand, Nellie, never mind the rest,” Cook interrupted with some effort. The little man’s face was the hue of antique mahogany, he lit another cigarette with a hand that shook. His niece gave him a side-glance, and appeared momentarily to be on the brink of some outburst similar to her other outbursts. She held it back, speaking from a quick second thought.

“Fannie wants it too, Uncle Marshall. I mean she wants things just as they are. She *wants* to —”

“Undoubtedly. I quite understand,” said Cook. Something trenchant in his utterance, mild and governed as it was, ended the discussion. Nellie, indeed, shrank a little. She was afraid of him at times — not so much of what he might say to her, as of what he might think of her. The girl could conceive no greater humiliation than for Uncle Marshall to find her dull. Presently, with conscious determination, they recommenced their first slight chatter, gossip, news, stories, and by degrees the odd tension relaxed.

The Maranda house was on Church Lane, in a neighbourhood established as “nice” about the year 1885, but now beginning to suffer an invasion of utilitarianism. Many of the old places had been turned into boarding-houses, many others into duplex flats; and at the entrance of the street, an ungainly apartment building, tiers on tiers of porches, windows aligned

like the cells for mail in a postoffice, occupied the site of the old Gilmore homestead, as Cook recollected.

"The Hun is at the gate!" he said, surveying it. "Our social doom is sealed! Nobody lives cheek by jowl with *that* — nobody!"

"If people know who you *are*, it doesn't make any difference," said Nellie, rather literally and simply.

They came to a good-sized house of indeterminate style, with a round bay on one corner, a rainbow-coloured window of "art-glass" evidently lighting the staircase-landing, a front porch adorned with intricately sculptured wooden railings, minarets and finials, and within the shelter of this last, as could be seen from the street, an invalid's wheel-chair with cushions from which somebody first waved a greeting to them, and then, starting up, called out excitedly. Some one else came running from the interior. Cook sent vague smiling politenesses in that general direction, somewhat hampered by the movements of getting out of the carriage, giving a hand to Nellie, taking off his hat and feeling in his pocket, all at very nearly the same instant. There was another high-pitched volley from the porch; Nellie began some confused speech and abruptly broke off; the author looked about, wondering if he had forgotten anything.

"Mis' M'randa, she's a-hollerin' to you, boss," the coloured driver notified him quite superfluously, as he took Cook's tip. "'Pears lak she's tellin' you sum-pin'. Is you got yo' grip? Yessuh, thanky, suh!" He turned about and drove away just as Fannie Maranda, out of breath, reached them.

"Oh, Uncle Marshall, so glad to see you!" she said cordially, taking both his hands, but with her eyes addressing Nellie. "Hasn't it been dreadfully hot,

though? Did you have a nice trip? You must be all tired out — only you're always so neat — you don't look as if *anything* could upset you —" Here she abandoned him, with an equally nervous and disjointed apology. "Just a minute, Uncle Marshall — I *beg* your pardon — Oh, the man's *gone*! Mercy, Nellie, did you —?" She half lowered her voice. "You know she didn't want Uncle Marsh to —"

"I didn't have a chance," said Nellie, shortly. "Never mind, Fannie!"

"She won't like it — she wanted *particularly* — you know —" the other girl whispered, with an alarmed look.

"I couldn't help it. I didn't try anyhow!" said Nellie, fiercely conclusive. "Do *stop*!" All at once her temper flared, and was smothered again, as she glanced at her uncle.

"What's up?" the latter inquired. In a second he realised that whatever was "up," it was something hideously awkward, requiring to be met with an appearance of unconsciousness; there was a heart-sinking familiarity in the scene. "Same old thing!" he thought while he braced himself to say gaily: "Some tragedy about the steak for dinner? Never mind it, Fannie! Nell's right — never mind!"

Nellie murmured feverishly something about it's being just nonsense — a — a surprise — they had intended to surprise him. Yes, that was it! They had meant to give him a surprise — ! She burst into a kind of savage giggle, and started quickly towards the house where all this while the other lady was standing at the head of the porch steps, talking or rather exclaiming in a shrilly sweet insistent voice. Fannie did not laugh; she stood still, troubled, out of coun-

tenance, not even able to feign laughter. Fannie was a large, serious-faced, blonde girl with beautiful and very near-sighted blue eyes; she looked thirty, and was in reality three years younger than her sister. Neither one of them would have been guessed, off-hand, and seen apart from him, to be any kin of Cook's; yet — for a curious fact — between the small, sallow, dark, homely man and Nellie Maranda who was considered a strikingly pretty woman, there did exist a resemblance too fleeting and elusive to be defined which sometimes caused people to declare that they might be known for uncle and niece anywhere.

"You're looking well, Fannie," the author now said. "Here! What are you trying to do?" he ejaculated precipitately, as she motioned to take up his luggage. Cook snatched it from her, horrified. "Good gracious, do you think I'm going to let you carry my things?"

"Oh, but I *like* to, Uncle Marshall! *Please* let me!"

"Not this time!"

She walked by his side, touching his sleeve with the tips of her fingers in a quaintly diffident caress. "It's so nice to have you here again, Uncle Marshall."

"Same to you, and many of 'em, Fan!" said Cook, elaborately jocosely — and also thoroughly sincere. *Blood is thicker than water!* He was thinking that after all it was good to get back home, and see the girls, and the hot, dirty, friendly old town, and the people whom he had known, amongst whom he had lived. What had possessed him a while ago to dream of evading all this — of escaping with an ordinary call —?

"*Fannie!*" cried the voice on the porch, anxiously,

“why don’t you take those things for your uncle? You *know* he’s not strong! He’ll be exhausted! Marshall, do put that down and let her carry it. I wish *I* could help — you know I would in a minute if I could —” And Cook having by this time reached her, his sister-in-law, or perhaps it would be more accurate to say his brother-in-law’s widow, came and welcomed him with almost hysterical warmth.

“Marshall dear, we *are* so glad to have you here. You know we’re simply bursting with pride about you — you know that, don’t you? At least you’ll believe it when I tell you so, for I never say anything I don’t mean, you know *that*! You’re late — I do hope dinner isn’t spoiled — you haven’t got time to take a bath — isn’t it a pity? — I know you want one, but dinner can’t wait any longer. You can just sit down the way you are — we don’t care if you are all over dust and dirt, do we, girls? It *does* make you look funny, though! Do look, Nellie, it’s so absurd to see your Uncle Marshall, of all men in the world, with a dirty neck and ears like a little boy!”

“Juliet, you’re just the same as ever — full of fun in spite of your health. Such a sense of humour!” said Cook with a heartiness that might have aroused some suspicion in any one who knew him well. Nellie, in fact, did give him a sharp glance; and something must have occurred at the moment to put her into a good temper, for she began to laugh. Cook went on smoothly: “May I wash my hands, though? There’s time for that? Is it my same old room? Fine! All right, Fannie, I know the way — I ought to!”

He went up into the pretty, feminine place. There were frilled pillows, frilled white curtains, a toilet-

table decked with frills, a bunch of pink sweet-peas in a dove-coloured vase, copies of all his novels in embroidered linen slip-covers, spread out upon a pale blue blotter with silver corner pieces on the white enamelled table by the window. The author looked around with a shame-faced grin. "It's pathetic!" he reprimanded himself. He sat down gingerly in one of the slim white chairs. Through the open window there came a scent of honeysuckle and the sound of the ladies' voices on the porch below. Mrs. Maranda's, pleasantly incisive, reached him distinctly.

"Didn't you give the man — the driver — didn't you give him that twenty-five cents, Nellie? *What!* Why, Nellie, I told you *positively* to be sure to tip him yourself! It's horrid and inhospitable to let your uncle do the tipping — besides he probably can't afford it. That's the reason I sent the carriage — you *knew* that. I gave you that quarter for that especial purpose — I thought you might forget it, so I sent Fannie to remind you, but I suppose she didn't get there quick enough — fleshy people can't get around very fast. Still I don't see why you didn't remember it in time yourself — I don't see how you could *let* your Uncle Marshall pay for anything while he's our guest —"

"I didn't forget. I couldn't help it. I don't think men like women to do things like that anyhow — not before their very faces, at least —"

"Very well, if you think you know so much more about men than I do. All the girls know more about men than the married women nowadays, it seems. No, you can keep the quarter, Nellie, I don't want it. I gave it to you to tip the driver with, and I considered

it gone from that moment, of course, so you may as well keep it —”

Cook got up with a violence which he immediately controlled, as he retreated from the window. “O Lord!” he uttered under his breath. Then he looked at his own vexed and dispirited face in the glass with a wry smile. “Same old thing!” he said again, wearily resigned.

CHAPTER III

THIS story which, against all appearances so far, is by no means the story of Mr. Marshall Cook, must stick to that gentleman's biography for a while yet; long enough, at least, to relate certain events of his career antedating Commencement Day, 1904, at Cambridge College. He is listed in *Who's Who?* and the year of his birth, 1858, correctly given — with a space considerably left for that of his death — together with some other relatively unimportant information, as that his father's name was Horace Cook, his mother's Anne Marshall, his present place of residence New York City, etc. In his native town, spite of its unimaginable growth and change during the half-century since he was born, there still remain some genealogically minded veterans who will tell you upon inquiry: "Cook? Oh, yes, he's one of that old Cook family. They're all gone now, except himself. Well, of course, there are Eleanor's girls, but one wouldn't call them *Cooks*, you know. He only had that one sister, Eleanor — Mrs. Frank Maranda. Not *this* Mrs. Maranda, she's a second wife. Eleanor's been dead for years."

Having got well started, the oldest inhabitant may be led into further details; as, for instance, that the name Maranda which to many ears has a strongly foreign sound, is, as a matter of fact, English or perhaps Irish. At any rate, Mr. Maranda came from

Baltimore, and there was nothing foreign about him, his family having been settled in America — the United States, that is — for two or three generations. He made a good deal of money in the insurance business; indeed, when he first came here, it was to manage the Middle-Western branch of the Baltimore Mutual, and that, doubtless, was how he happened to get so well acquainted with Horace Cook, who was in the Tri-State Fire and Life for so long. Afterwards Maranda married Eleanor; they had the two children, just those two girls, and then Eleanor died. That was when Nellie — the older daughter, named for her mother — was about ten years old. Sad, wasn't it?

Here very likely the oldest inhabitant — especially if it happens to be a lady — will heave a sigh of relish, and will then continue: "Nobody could blame Mr. Maranda for marrying again, even though it was so soon — only a year. What was he to do with those poor little motherless children — and girls at that — with his business on his mind, and no one to trust them to — nothing but servants? A man is so helpless in a case like that!" It seems Mr. Maranda had no feminine relatives, widowed or spinster sisters, cousins or aunts, to step into the breach; none came forward with such an offer, anyhow. Both grandparents on the Cook side had died shortly before Eleanor. Marshall, then a lank seedy young fellow who had a position with the Utopia Buggy Company book-keeping and was no earthly good at it or at anything else — people thought in those days — Marshall Cook was living with the Marandas. The forlorn household consisted of the two men, the two children, fat little patient, quiet Fannie, and Nellie, a black-browed youngster with a frightful temper, it was re-

ported. Who could blame Maranda, sure enough?

Besides, he behaved very sensibly. It was not as if — the gossips remarked to one another approvingly — he had gone off and got some flighty, frivolous, ignorant and self-occupied young girl, with a pretty face, and nothing behind it. No, he made a suitable and dignified match. The second wife was Juliet Morehead, a woman of his own age — some people said a trifle older — a very bright woman besides being a sweet, lovely character, as was shown by the way she took hold of and administered the house, and mothered the little girls. She never had any children of her own, but she certainly was a model step-mother. That notoriously difficult position was not made any easier for her by Nellie Maranda, the one with the temper, it was sometimes rumoured; Fannie, on the other hand, probably never gave her any trouble. Fannie was devoted to “Aunt Juliet” — as well she might be, and Nellie too! Mrs. Maranda — they said — did everything for those girls, *everything*; even after Frank Maranda’s death, even after she had that attack of nervous prostration which left her a more or less helpless invalid for the rest of her life, she kept on living with them and “doing” for them. This, too, in face of the fact that she had that shiftless brother, Homer Morehead, on her hands and was understood to be constantly “doing” for him and his family, too.

For Juliet had the Morehead money. It was on account of the manifest shiftlessness of his son, Homer, that old Judge Morehead left almost all of his comfortable fortune to his daughter. The wisdom of this arrangement was proved by the fact that Homer ran through his share in no time at all, while Juliet

always held on to hers. If it had not been for her, nobody knows what would have become of Homer — or the Maranda girls either, as Juliet herself used to say with a laugh. She always made light of what she did for them — she was of a sunny, kindly, generous disposition. “Everybody says I’d give away my head, if it wasn’t fastened on!” she often told Fannie and Nellie gaily. Yes, it was fortunate for all parties concerned that Juliet had money, not only because of Homer, the improvident and do-less, with his large, improvident, do-less family, but because when Mr. Maranda died some five years after this second marriage, he left so little. He had made a handsome income, but they must have lived up to it fully. There were some bonds for Nellie and Fannie; the girls had perhaps five hundred a year between them, and the Church Street house, it was discovered, stood in their names.

“They can’t live on *that*, of course — *I* shall have to provide for them. But they have this home, and their income will dress them both nicely — with what I give them,” Mrs. Juliet told all their friends, in her open way. She believed in being open, insisted on absolute frankness and truthfulness above all else. “It would put you girls in such a bad light to outsiders if they saw you extravagantly dressed when they all know how dependent you are,” she pointed out to them wisely and kindly. “That was the reason I thought I ought to tell Mrs. Boynton myself that that elegant wrap Fannie was wearing was one of mine that I gave her the other day. I told her about it’s being a new one that I’d only worn once or twice, Fan. I wasn’t going to have her going around saying that you wore my old cast-off clothes. She seemed to think it per-

fectly wonderful that I would give away anything so handsome as that, but I said to her: 'Why, Mrs. Boynton, I *love* to give things to the girls. They're just the same as my own children, and don't you know that a mother's greatest delight is in making sacrifices for her children — particularly if they are daughters? I *love* to do for the girls.' I didn't think anything of it; you know it's just the way I do all the time. I never *put on* anything, or pretend to be anything but what I am. But you ought to have seen Mrs. Boynton! She was so touched that her face flushed and her eyes filled up. She said: 'Oh, Mrs. Maranda, you're simply the *best* woman I know!' Wasn't that ridiculous!"

"Yes, wasn't it!" Nellie agreed promptly and pleasantly — but somehow not entirely to Mrs. Maranda's satisfaction. She felt a vague discomfiture, a vague resentment, and said to herself irrelevantly that it didn't make any difference how much she did for them, Nellie was perfectly unappreciative!

The melancholy and discreditable truth is that Miss Eleanor Maranda, even at the very beginning when she was a mere child, refused, sometimes tacitly by those actions that speak louder than words, sometimes — when she flew into one of her rages — *à haute voix*, with sharp and singularly well-aimed speeches, to join in the chorus of praise and admiration raised by everybody else around her step-mother. She evaded Mrs. Maranda's profuse caresses, and never made the slightest motion towards returning them, she declined to say she loved the new mother, declined in so many words to believe that the new mother loved her, declined to obey her, would have declined to have anything to do with her at all, had that course been pos-

sible. As she grew older, the corrective discipline she incurred — and undoubtedly deserved — seemed indeed to develop another spirit in the girl, but one totally different from what might have been expected, and still intractable; she was neither sulky nor submissive; she did not fawn, she did not rebel; her manner toward the older woman crystallised into a kind of hard and brilliant civility with which no one could reasonably have found fault, yet which at times contrived to be more offensive than the grossest ill-breeding. “You treat me just as if I were a stranger!” Mrs. Maranda complained with tears. “Don’t you want me to be as polite to you as I would be to a stranger?” inquired Nellie evenly. The other found herself without a retort, and that naturally aggravated the grievance; for not the least irritating quality of Nellie’s manner was that it suggested cleverness. If there must be people who dislike us, we would rather they should be notoriously dull people; somehow, any display of intelligence or good taste on their part, in other directions, affronts us! Perhaps Mrs. Maranda, notwithstanding the sweet pride in and affection for the two girls, about which her friends were continually lauding her, was not too well-pleased when the same friends with the best intentions in the world, brought her reports of Nellie’s brightness in class, Nellie’s undeniable grace and good looks, Nellie’s quickness of tongue and sense of humour. “Yes, she is not at all an ordinary girl — rather *difficult*, sometimes, you know,” she would permit herself to say with a significant sigh. And the visitor, remembering those tales of Nellie’s temper — true tales they were, too! — would go away moved and wondering at Mrs. Maranda’s patience and unselfishness — Mrs. Maranda

herself used to wonder at her own patience and unselfishness for that matter.

For Nellie *was* difficult. Letting alone that unkind and groundless prejudice against her father's second wife, letting alone that capacity for making herself disagreeable already described, the girl was full of the strangest whims — whims of laughing over things incomprehensibly non-humorous to Mrs. Maranda, and on the other hand of crying in the wrong place for the wrong reason. Though, as has been seen, she must have been cold-hearted in the extreme to have treated her step-mother as she did, Nellie could be inordinately tender to such unresponsive creatures as her animal pets; she would be forever bringing in orphan kittens, mangy dogs, trapped sparrows off the street and tending them and ministering to them by the hour; she was even known to have stopped deliberately outside a saloon (of all places!) where some drayman's team happened to be standing, and washed off the horses' sweaty collar-sore necks in the watering-trough! Mrs. Juliet was very properly scandalised; she read Nellie a long and — for once — a severe lecture. "This is no more than what your dear father would have said to you. . . ." "I am only anxious to prevent your thoughtlessly bringing disgrace on his name. . . ." "When a girl makes herself *common* in such a way, people naturally blame those who have brought her up. . . ." "I shall have a great deal of trouble explaining this conduct of yours to outsiders. Try to remember that when you have any of these wild impulses. Just say to yourself: 'It will give Aunt Juliet trouble, and which is the more unkind, to let this horse or cow or whatever it is go, or to give somebody trouble?' Just ask yourself that, Eleanor, and

I'm sure you won't ever do anything coarse or unlady-like again. . . ." These are a few excerpts from Mrs. Maranda's gentle and judicious remarks; and she wound up by announcing with firmness: "I believe in being kind to dumb animals, but there is such a thing as carrying kindness to extremes, and I will have to say to you, Eleanor, that I will not have any more of those nasty, dirty pets of yours in my house."

"In whose house?" said Nellie, with her deadly smoothness. And there was a silence while Mrs. Maranda's justifiable wrath, her justifiably hurt feelings gathered head.

"I don't think that you would live in *your* house (since you are so bent upon having me understand that it is *your* house) very long without me, Eleanor," she said with a reproachful dignity. "Aren't you yourself forgetting something? It costs a good deal for all of us to live here, Nellie."

"That's just what I was thinking! It costs you so much, and you don't really have to do it. Fannie and I and Uncle Marsh could scratch along somehow, and in conscience nobody could blame you if you went and lived with your dear brother. They need help more, and they are ever so much nicer than we are — or than *I* am, at any rate. You wouldn't have the responsibility of me any longer, and instead of only Fannie to wait on you, there would be all the Morehead children, and they are seven, aren't they? They were at last accounts. Only one Fannie and seven dear, sweet, loving nephews and nieces: Ella and Louise and Jamie and Caroline and — what's the name of the one with the hare-lip? — Douglas? David's the baby, I believe —"

"I will not stay here to be insulted this way!" said

Mrs. Maranda, and got up trembling with the impotent anger which Nellie seemed to know how to arouse in her, even by a method at once so bizarre and so simple as the enumeration of Homer's children. She rustled to the door, clutching blindly at the knob. "Where is Fannie? Tell Fannie to come to me and bring the aromatic spirits of ammonia —"

"And there would be Mrs. Homer, too — your dear sister-in-law that you're so fond of," Nellie went on, callously smiling. "You know you'd *love* to live with her —"

But Mrs. Maranda was gone. Strange to relate, Nellie could rout her at any time by these references. Yet few of us would consider ourselves "insulted" by the mention of our relatives in terms so amiable. Homer Morehead, it was true, had in the everyday phrase "married beneath him." He married a chambermaid in some third-rate hotel down town, having first met her, gossip unkindly reported, when she was taking care of him during a prolonged spell of sobering up after an equally prolonged spree. By this time, fifteen years had gone over; the pretty girl of those days was now a fat, blowsy, loud, good-natured slattern; there was a houseful of fat, loud, slatternly girls, and unkempt louts of boys. From a visit there, one came away with weird memories of smells of cooking and cheap perfumery commingled; of sounds of doors banging, dishes clattering, the piano metallically discoursing rag-time airs; of the sight of plush picture-frames, the parlour fire-place densely smoking, Mrs. Homer in a dress with grease-spots down the front and the placket-hole open. Brother or no brother, it would have been impossible for some people to exist in such an environment; but Mrs.

Maranda, as she often said, would gladly have gone to live with the Moreheads, so as to help them along, only for the fact that in her invalid state, she would have been merely an added care in that already care-burdened household. "They can't keep any servant, of course, and a person who is laid on the shelf as I have to be, can't help but be a care, I know that. I do all I can for them in other ways," Mrs. Juliet would explain to a circle of sympathising admirers. She was absolutely honest; she believed every word she uttered. Nellie perversely chose to disbelieve; but even so, why should the above innocent-sounding speeches have irritated the older lady, affectionate and self-sacrificing sister that she was? Impossible to guess.

For a grateful contrast, Fannie Maranda was never known to say a word or behave in any way that was not dutiful, obedient, and becoming to her name and upbringing. She was as pretty in the blond colouring as Nellie in the dark, her features even more nearly regular and neatly outlined; and — to keep on with the comparison — if she was not quite so clever as the older sister, she was still quite clever enough — "whenever she had the chance," the other girls of their set would sometimes add. According to them, the main thing she lacked was some odd, purely physical quality of brightness which Nellie most markedly possessed; they called it "*style*," with impressive emphasis, whenever they tried to give it a name at all, and not infrequently pronounced the opinion that Fannie would show it, too — "if she ever had a chance." Pressed to explain this more or less obscure utterance, the young things were generally at fault; they could not say exactly what it was that

made Fannie so different from everybody else, especially from her own sister; they vigorously denied that Nellie eclipsed her intentionally or not; it would seem that Fannie deliberately preferred the shadow. She stayed at home a great deal; she said she didn't care to go out; whenever you went there she was always busy, reading to Mrs. Maranda, or doing some sewing; Fannie was "awfully devoted" to Mrs. Maranda. Nellie wasn't — Nellie was, well, you know, more *original*. But Fannie was just as sweet as could be, and she'd have a good time, if anybody ever let her have a chance!

And what, all the while, was Mr. Marshall Cook doing in this *galère*? Nothing of any importance — nothing at all, from his sister-in-law's point of view, although he went down to the office every morning and came home every night, and paid his board punctually, and had no bills or bad habits; and, in short, conducted himself like any other respectable gentleman of her acquaintance, except in the matter of his taste for letters. Mrs. Juliet used to inveigh compassionately against his spending so much time over those stories and "things" he was always trying to write. "It takes *genius* to write anything, you know, Marshall. And I don't believe even the geniuses make much of a living at it; it must be so precarious. They can't ever be sure that what they write is going to sell or not. Of course, if you could only write something *good* the magazines would take it; but to earn anything like a steady income, you'd have to keep on writing good things, and that would be a fearful strain. As it is, you keep on sending those things and sending them, and the editors send them straight back; and there's all that time wasted, that you can't

ever bring back! You might be doing something useful or improving yourself; at least you ought to stick to your book-keeping."

"I believe I do stick to my book-keeping," said Marshall.

"Oh, yes. But you know what I mean; your head is full of this other thing all the time —"

"Not during office-hours!" said Marshall; and he added with determined good-humour: "Come now, Juliet, if I choose to fritter away my spare hours writing, it's very sad to witness, of course, but *you* don't need to have it on your mind. I'm willing for you to tell me how to do my duty, but why not let me take my pleasure my own way?"

"I don't see how it can be any pleasure to you to work so hard over those stories and then have them all sent back time after time," said the lady reasonably. "You know you *can* keep books. I'd rather be a good book-keeper than a failure writing stories; it would be more dignified. It's not just my own judgment, either, Marshall, *everybody* says the same thing."

Marshall let her have the last word; in fact, what was there for him to say? There were moments when the young fellow — he was still a young fellow at this time — felt a depressing conviction that she was right. The only defence he had was the fact of his being, contrary to popular belief, a very good book-keeper. He had enough intelligence and humour to realise that the book-keeping was his sheet-anchor to windward, and the strength of character to hold to it, at all events until he could be fairly certain of an equal independence following the trade of his choice; even then, book-keeping might still be an anchor in re-

serve, so to speak. "If literature fails, there is always the wood-pile," he would quote, resolutely light-hearted. The office-desk was Marshall's wood-pile; the hours he put in earning his hundred dollars a month balanced, he thought, those other hours of arduous idleness, Sundays, holidays, long, toilsome, delightful nights. In justice to him, it ought to be said that he never took himself too seriously; he was always ready to make sport of his fruitless efforts. It was partly because that seemed to him the most unassailable pose; be yourself the first one to laugh at yourself. After such conversations as the above with Mrs. Maranda, he would go and start an essay . . . "Failure imposes no responsibilities; so that to fail — within limits — is to lead the most easy-going and independent of lives. Success buys a man's freedom, and by a masterstroke of irony, impoverishes him at the same time . . ." and so forth, in as near an imitation as he could compass of Stevenson, Bacon, Montaigne, whomsoever he happened to have been reading last. Mercy on us, what a deskful of lyrics, sonnets, sketches, stories, critical and philosophical dissertations accumulated before Success began simultaneously to reward and impoverish him! His room — it was not then the pink and white shell in which we have since beheld him but a prosaic apartment with a little sheet-iron gas-stove and a black walnut bureau — would have overflowed with manuscripts, had he not been a man of methodical and old-maidish habits. As Mrs. Maranda pointed out, the literary productions invariably returned. "In the economy of creation — *my* creation — nothing is ever destroyed. It only changes its form!" Cook would say with Spartan laughter, as he burned them up, one by one.

He must have been hard upon thirty years old before he achieved recognition — reputation would be too large a word. Eleanor was seventeen or so when her uncle went to New York to live. “All the best talent in the country gravitates to New York sooner or later, you know,” Mrs. Maranda explained to that part of the public which now suddenly began to take an interest in Marshall Cook. She herself had always done so, always believed in his powers, always encouraged him, she said — and sincerely thought. Her gratification at seeing Marshall’s name and work in print, actually bought and paid for, was not the less kind and genuine for being coupled with a naïve astonishment. “It does seem wonderful, doesn’t it? But I always said you had it in you, Marshall. I knew you would amount to something *some* day, in spite of what everybody else said,” she proclaimed with pride. Cook laughed and Nellie laughed too, with disproportionate heartiness, it seemed to Mrs. Maranda, who had spoken without humorous intent; but it was only natural for Marshall to be in good spirits, she reflected, and as for Nellie, the girl was forever copying him.

So Mr. Cook went; and he did not come back, except for short and infrequent visits. By the facts that he was noticeably spruce in appearance on these and on other occasions when people ran across him in New York, that he never seemed to be at all low in pocket, was known to have travelled widely, had a new novel out every year or so, and sent Nellie and Fannie, of whom he was fond in his way, generous presents which the girls freely talked about and showed — by these facts, the community surmised that Marshall Cook had “made good.” And when he

wrote that volume of picaresque tales containing the perfectly dreadful one called *The Adventure of Silvio and the Fair Venetian*, the one that was dramatised afterwards, and the Public Morals League used influence with the mayor to prevent its being produced — when that happened, I say, everybody knew that Marshall Cook had definitely “arrived,” and was probably on the road to fortune!

CHAPTER IV

DINNER went off without incident, Cook accepting and discharging the rôle of domestic hero with the good grace he could always command. The little man remembered earlier days when his comfort and approval had not been so strenuously sought after with an amusement entirely humane. “‘I was not ever thus . . . but now—ow!’” he quoted at himself with gusto. He thought all three women presented feminine types well worth study. “What would happen if I should fall to swearing at the servant, and calling the coffee slop?” he speculated inwardly. “Why, nothing at all, probably! Juliet would simply bow before the familiar manifestation of the Eternal Male; she might even be a little proud of her acquaintance with the artistic temperament *en déshabille*! Poor Fannie would go away and cry — quietly in a corner where I couldn’t see her. Eleanor — well, Eleanor is much more of a problem. She might fly out and tell me I was a coarse brute; she might rend me with deft sarcasm; or she might — yes, she actually might put her neck under my heel! Even intelligent women seem to have that extraordinary liking for masculine tyranny —”

His sister-in-law unconsciously interrupted. “I don’t want the tenderloin, Marshall,” she cried out energetically from her end of the table. “I never have allowed myself to get into that selfish, mean

habit of having dainties cooked up for me separately, or taking the choicest bits on the dish. *You* take it, take that piece you just cut, and give me off of the sirloin side. I don't care whether I'm sick or well, I simply *won't* be pampered."

"It isn't everybody that has your power of self-sacrifice and self-control," said Cook, helping himself obediently.

"No, that's what people are always telling me. They seem to think it so wonderful in a person as sick as I have been for so long. *I* don't think anything of it at all! It's perfectly natural to me to be that way. Too funny!—Mattie, that's our scrubwoman that we have to come in and clean every now and then, was here the other day to do the curtains, and Fannie wheeled my chair out in the yard so that I could give directions, and right in the middle of putting the curtains on the frames, Mattie stopped short and said: 'Well, Mis' M'randa'—that's the way she talks, you know—'you sut'n'y is wunnerful, settin' there in that sick-chair, jes' runnin' ev'thing lak you was as strong as anybody!' 'Nothing wonderful about it, Mattie,' I said. 'I just make up my mind to *do* it!' She said just what you said just now, Marshall, that's what made me think of her— 'Well, Mis' M'randy, there sut'n'y ain't many lak *you*. You is got more will-power than anybody I ever saw.'"

"You're vindicated, Uncle Marsh," said Eleanor. "Mattie's a judge. It's something for you to be in Mattie's class."

"Wasn't that the telephone?" Fannie interposed hastily; she looked from her uncle to her sister with troubled, appealing blue eyes. Perhaps luckily, the telephone had indeed begun to ring; Nellie jumped up,

quite as a matter of course, it appeared, to answer it. The instrument stood on a table in the hall whence they could presently hear her end of the conversation, light exclamations, laughter, subtle catchwords impenetrable to the layman, but evidently of some deep, ridiculous import—it was charmingly silly and youthful and gay.

“That does remind me so much of the times when you were at home, Marshall,” said Mrs. Juliet, with a reminiscent sigh. “Don’t you remember how Eliza Grace used to call you up and talk forever? And then you’d call *her* up and talk forever! I had to tell you that you oughtn’t to use the telephone all day long like that. Don’t you remember how I used to tell you?”

“Yes. You told me,” said the author. Innocent words enough, but Fannie looked worried again; possibly Mrs. Maranda detected some note of warning which she interpreted after her own fashion.

“Oh, I didn’t mean—” she checked herself. “Bessie Grace isn’t married *yet*, did you know?” she said, with a kind of elaborate avoidance of significance. “She must be every day of thirty-five. Those same beautiful teeth, though, still.”

“Thirty-five would be a little early to install false ones, wouldn’t it?” said Marshall, fairly moved to laughter against his will.

“Oh, yes, I know *that*—I was only trying to give you some idea of how little she has changed. You’d know her at once.”

“I daresay I would. I see Miss Grace sometimes at that summer place they have down on Long Island. I go down there once in a while—weak-ends, you know.”

"*Oh!*" said Mrs. Maranda, somewhat taken aback; then she laughed amiably. "Well, I might have *known*, if I had stopped to *think*. It's a very handsome place, isn't it? They have so much money. After all, it's no wonder Bessie's never married. She could always have everything she wanted anyhow. She doesn't *need* to marry."

Cook privately uttered an ejaculation much in the style of those he had recently uttered, but to quite another power, shocking to relate. "Oh,—! Same old thing!" he thought fiercely. He even began aloud: "I really don't believe Miss Grace—" but having by the time he got that far, got himself in hand again, and into his inveterate mood of ironic contemplation, he let the speech merge unobtrusively, as it were, into a sip of coffee. Why should he take up the cudgels in behalf of Bessie Grace? Silence would serve her better; and as to himself, silence invariably served him best in Mrs. Maranda's company.

Nellie came back just then, bright-eyed, with a higher pink in her clear, dark cheeks, smiling a little consciously, even defiantly, as she met their inquiring looks. "It was Mr. Loring," she said to Cook, slipping into her chair. "He said he was going to telephone, you know—" She paused expectantly, and then, as nobody had anything to say, added: "He wants to take us out to-morrow afternoon in his machine."

"Us?" repeated her uncle. "You mean you girls."

"Oh, I can't go," said Fannie nervously. "I've got to finish something I'm doing. I don't want to go."

"I don't suppose he really expects my company or yours, Fan," Mrs. Maranda said, beginning to laugh.

"I never go anywhere, and you hate the wind and dust so. He must have known it was perfectly safe to include *us*."

"He said everybody," said Nellie belligerently. "Fannie doesn't take the time to go automobiling often enough to find out whether she minds the wind and dust or not —"

"*Don't, Nell, please!*" Fannie said in an undertone.

Nellie didn't; that is to say, she at once moderated her voice and manner to the formidable politeness she had cultivated. It had the air of having been acquired from Cook himself by inheritance or association or direct imitation, for it was at these moments that she most resembled him.

"Oh, yes, Fannie, I forgot," she said, earnestly penitent; "you want to get that embroidered waist you're making for Aunt Juliet done. That's important — yes, you ought to stay at home and finish that, by all means —"

"But I *want* to — I *like* it —" said the other girl vehemently. She altered her form of adjuration, glancing apologetically at her uncle. "Now, Nellie, *do* —! Isn't she funny, Uncle Marshall? She thinks everybody hates sewing because she does."

"Any one would suppose, to hear Eleanor, that I made a slave of Fannie," said Mrs. Maranda, indignantly. "She *will* do it, Marshall. I try my best to stop her, but she *will* do it. You love to sew for me, don't you, Fan?"

"Why, of course I do, Aunt Juliet. And besides, I'd like to see anybody *make* me if I didn't want to!" Fannie asserted with prodigious spirit. "Don't be such a goosie, Nell! I'd rather be sitting here nice

and cool and quiet than tearing around a whole afternoon in all this heat and dust in somebody's old automobile!"

"*There!* You see, Marshall!" said Mrs. Maranda triumphantly. "Fan and I understand each other, don't we?" She stretched out her hand, and squeezed her niece's affectionately.

"Besides, it's just as Aunt Juliet says," Fannie went on; "I don't believe Mr. Loring expects *me* for one minute."

Eleanor eyed her sister with a peculiar expression, seeing which Cook thought it high time to intervene with the suggestion that Amzi Two hardly seemed to be enough of a diplomat for the behaviour ascribed to him. "At any rate, *I've* been asked, and *I'm* going just as if I thought he meant it!" he declared. "How about you, Nellie?"

"Oh, I accepted right away. I don't care a thing about doing my duty; I'm going to have a good time," said Nellie, incomprehensibly. She kept on, overriding Fannie's low-voiced prayer, "*Please, Nellie —!*" "You know, Uncle Marshall, I think that's so good that you make the old watch-mender, old John Deering say — in *The Wagon and The Star*, you know? — where you make him say: 'You do your duty and you'll be made a convenience of. That's all doing your duty ever gets you!' I think that's so good!"

"Thank you," said Marshall, with a slight grin. "Personally though, it's my belief that there may be a certain spiritual satisfaction to be got out of it. Shall we return to our mutton? What time is young Mr. Loring coming for us?"

"About four o'clock. But —" Nellie hesitated; then she explained precipitately, as if to hurry it over

and be done with it, that she believed the invitation came in part from *old* Mr. Loring — “The other one, the young one, said his father thought you — you might like to go through one of their plants,” the girl finished with some diffidence.

“*One* of their plants? Their ice factories? Do you mean to say they have *more* than one?”

“Oh, yes. They have a chain — they call it a chain, you know. It’s — it’s a trade term, I daresay,” said Nellie still diffidently, reddening. “*Don’t* laugh, Uncle Marsh!”

“I’m not laughing. I’m lost in admiration of that figure of speech. A chain of ice factories! It’s stupendous; it gives you some idea of what it must be to be an ice-king. *One*? I want to see the whole what-d’ye-call-it — the *parure* —”

“I don’t see what there is so funny about it — you’re just teasing, Uncle Marsh. You know I couldn’t *help* saying you’d love to go. They — they want to show you some attention — they only want to be nice,” Nellie protested hotly. For this one time she did not avail herself of the arsenal of barbed little ironies she ordinarily kept at hand. All at once her small squared chin quivered; her lips that were oddly and attractively squared at the corners quivered so that she had trouble to manage the words. “They’re so interested in their business they think it must be interesting to everybody. *I* think it’s fine for anybody to feel that way. It’s — it’s so *big* and *manly*!”

“Why, of course, Nell — I understand. It’s all right for Mr. Loring to be proud of his work and to like to show it off to people; that’s the way a man ought to feel,” said Cook, contrite, surprised, remotely

disquieted. "I wasn't making fun of him. It *is* very nice of him to want to entertain me. To be sure, I don't know—" he stopped and fingered his napkin an instant. "I don't know much about machinery. Hope I won't seem abysmally dull when they try to explain things to me," he ended fluently enough, although that was not what he had set out to say. "I don't know why they should exert themselves to this extent on *my* account," was the remark first on his lips; but at that very moment some glimmering perception of their reasons—or of young Amzi's reasons, at least—entered Mr. Cook's mind. Not for naught had he been writing novels for ten years, and studying his fellow-man for an even longer time. But it was neither of the Amzis, father or son, who disquieted the eminent man of letters; it was his niece Eleanor.

However, the next day when at the torrid hour of mid-afternoon he had named—in fact, twenty minutes in advance of it—young Mr. Loring and the shuff and another automobile, a light grey one this time of equal size but still more magnificent appointments, drew up before the house, Miss Maranda was not only unprepared, but kept the equipage waiting until long past the time agreed on in the coolest and most approved style. Cook, on his way downstairs, glanced into the shaded room where his sister-in-law, in a white lawn negligé, effervescing with ruffles, lace edges and knots of lavender ribbon, was disposed on the chaise longue; in a chair near by Fannie bent over more sheer white stuff, laces and ribbons mounded in her lap. Since luncheon, they had occupied these positions, a gentle monotone of instruction, advice, critical comment flowing from the older lady.

"Better change your mind and come along with us, Fannie," said Cook, halting at the threshold.

"Oh, she hasn't got time to get dressed now," Mrs. Maranda called out. "I don't think it would be wise for Fannie to go out in this heat anyhow, I'm glad she decided not to. It's not very safe for stout people to go out in the sun. I'd have been worried to death if Fannie had gone."

Cook stepped inside the room. "I should think you'd be tired," he said, standing over the girl's chair. "What's that you're doing? Ripping something? You can't see in this light, Fannie, you'll put your eyes out." He made a motion to raise the curtain, but Mrs. Maranda arrested him with a high sound of protest.

"*Don't!* Don't let that blaze of sunlight in here, Marshall! You've forgotten that window faces west. We'd be broiled to a crisp. All Fannie needs is a little light on her hands, barely enough to see to cut the threads. Men *are* the funniest things when they undertake to tell women how to work!" she remarked in accents of humorous vexation. "You aren't tired, are you, Fannie?"

"*Me?* No, indeed!" said Fannie, with cheerful emphasis. She straightened up, drawing a breath of relief, pushing her rumpled fair hair from off her forehead with the back of her hand. In the semi-dark her face looked pale above her limp, stringy, white blouse. "I wish I hadn't sewed this quite so carefully, that's all!" she said, ruefully smiling. "It makes it just that much harder to take apart."

"Why take it apart, then?" her uncle wanted to know. He lifted up a section of the garment warily. It seemed to him an arabesque of strips of lace and

embroidery; there were numberless small hooks and eyes, and groups of tiny tucks crossed and re-crossed one another in complex reticulations. "It looks very gorgeous to me."

"Well, it turned out not quite what Aunt Juliet wanted. She thought of something else —"

"Oh, it's given us no end of trouble," Mrs. Maranda explained. "Fannie's had to rip it all up, every stitch, twice before this. It simply *wouldn't* fit comfortably. Finally the other day, I thought out a way to get it *right* at last, so we went at it again, tooth and nail. We've got it *now*, I'm sure. The third time's the charm, you know."

"I see. It must be nice to work for you, Juliet, you always seem to have so many ideas about how to do things," said Cook.

Fannie spoke quickly. "It's not like *work*, you know, Uncle Marshall. It's just sewing."

"Oh, I suppose sewing *does* look like work to a *man*," said Mrs. Maranda with an indulgent laugh. "I'm just like you, though, Fan, I never thought of sewing as *work*, when I had my health. I don't think Fan's as good at it as I used to be, but she does well enough. I'd never find fault with Fannie's sewing."

"You never find fault anyhow. You just suggest improvements, eh?" said Marshall, suavely.

"Come on, now, Fannie," he urged the girl again. "Drop that and come with us."

"I *can't*, Uncle Marshall. You go on yourself, and don't mind me," Fannie said, ripping steadily.

"Good gracious, Marshall, don't nag the poor child so! You mean it kindly, but it gets to be very wearing," Mrs. Juliet mildly admonished him.

Cook obeyed, philosophically repeating his formula

in private: "Same old thing!" and wondering for what was probably the thousandth time whether after all it did not argue a certain pettiness of spirit in himself to be so irritated by things so petty. Nellie joined him in crisp white skirts, white shoes, a white hat pinned at what he guessed to be the angle of extreme smartness on her dead black hair and anchored down by a white veil. Cook thought that he had never seen anything more enticing than the fashion in which this veil with its dots drew up snugly under the girl's chin, the slack of it twisted with skill into a little tight peak; it was neat, captivating, irresistible. He was sure no other woman could put on a veil in exactly that way; yet like all the small adjustments of Nellie's toilette, it was visibly uncalculated. That was one of her strongest points, he reflected, that take-it-or-leave-it integrity of good looks, that effortless and unconscious distinction. Having awaited the moment of Miss Maranda's farewells to her household with some misgivings, he was more or less surprised but fervently thankful when nothing untoward happened. Instead, Nellie came away with an ordinary word or two, in a kind of happy preoccupation.

"Good-bye! I suppose we'll be back about six or half-past," she called out, smiled absently at her uncle and walked out of the house and down the steps, buttoning her gloves, with her eyes, which somehow seemed bigger and brighter to-day than usual, fixed on the automobile — or the young man by it — at the gate.

Mr. Loring was slouching negligently against the side of the car, hands in pockets, smoking one of his fearsome cigars, with his hat tilted forward to ward off the white hot sun; and at their approach he did not

alter this attitude, merely remarking gruffly: "Hello; you're late!"

"Really?" said Nellie, meeting his scowl with a piquant bravado.

He mimicked her. "Yeah! 'Really'! Say, you may as well know it right now, when I say a quarter to four to-day, I mean a quarter to four to-day. I don't mean to-morrow morning at half-past ten."

Cook decided that this must be intended humorously; it must embody Amzi Two's ideas of the feathery jocularities suited to the comprehension of the opposite sex—"But he had better look out how he adopts that bullying tone with Eleanor, even in fun," thought her uncle. Lo and behold, Eleanor took it meekly as a lamb!

"Oh, I—I didn't know that it made any difference. I didn't suppose we had to be so deadly punctual as all that," she said, laughing deprecatingly, fingering the little twist of her veil, lifting to him eyes full of disarming appeal. Without a hint of coquetry, such a look would have reduced the average young man to a jelly-like state of acquiescence, of admiring submission; as a matter of fact, it did obviously so reduce the chauffeur who caught it on the wing, so to speak, and stared and coloured foolishly. The chauffeur, by the way, had taken off his hat before her and stood up straight, and altogether looked and acted ten times more like a gentleman than his master, to Cook's mind. Young Mr. Loring, for his part, remained unmoved, to all outward seeming, at least; to tell the truth, his countenance was scarcely qualified to exhibit any emotion readily or vividly.

"Didn't know, huh?" he inquired. He looked away from her deliberately—but not without effort,

Cook judged — then back. “Don’t you try any girly-girly business like that. You’re too smart for it anyhow.” And now his eyes finally came to rest on her with an expression that caused Cook hastily to avert his own. Such a jumble of inconsistencies is the nature of man that the writer of *Silvio and the Fair Venetian*, besides being himself a person of good moral character, was strongly of the opinion that what he called with a commendable vagueness “all that sort of thing” ought to be confined strictly to fiction; confronted with it in real life, it made him ashamed. Nellie did not seem offended, her uncle noticed; but girls either do not understand “that sort of thing,” or think they must pretend not to understand it, he reasoned inwardly.

He became aware that their host was addressing him. “Any time to-day! Just say *when!* It’s not more than hot enough to fry an egg right where you’re standing, but don’t hurry yourself!” young Amzi observed in that vein of dainty irony which he had at command. He was already established at the steering-wheel, with Nellie beside him; she smiled over his shoulder at her uncle with an odd sort of apologetic gaiety. The chauffeur stood at attention in a killingly stylish pose, one eye on the young lady; Cook got in, and they sped with giddy smoothness up the street.

CHAPTER V

ALL being fish that comes anywhere near the nets of Mr. Cook's profession, he would not ordinarily have let slip the chance to get acquainted with Garry and Garry's world afforded him by this ride, throughout which he and the chauffeur, sitting together in the back of the automobile, were left to their own entertainment, and might have exchanged all sorts of confidences without interruption or fear of being overheard by the other half of the party. But his friendly purveyors of "material" would have been concerned to know that, for once, the novelist neglected that which was fairly under his hand. He scarcely spoke to Garry and made no attempt to draw the young man out; furthermore, he paid only scant attention to the landscape, the streets and houses and public squares, parks, monuments which indeed whizzed past at a gait unfavourable to careful examination. Perhaps he noticed that there had been few revolutionary alterations since his day; at any rate, they manifestly did not interest him. He sat dumbly surveying the two pairs of shoulders in front of him, these slim and elegantly turned, those hulking like a prize-fighter's, with mounting perplexity, distaste and reluctant apprehension.

"... In short, I was — and still am, for that matter — a prey to the gloomiest forebodings," Cook later wrote to one of his intimates. "The phrase is not new, it's barely possible you have seen it before;

but it's beautiful language, and describes my state of mind to a T. Nothing new either, or necessarily alarming, about two young people falling in love with each other — but if you could behold these together! It's incredible and true! You know my niece, and though it is hardly likely that you have met the young man, you may have seen him, as they tell me he is now a neighbour of yours in the old Henderson place. He is physically of an architecture not easily overlooked — somewhere between Siegfried and John L. Sullivan. I judge his intelligence finds itself in very roomy quarters; in fact, I shouldn't wonder if it knocked about quite loose. . . . That this great oaf should be in love with Nellie is not surprising — wouldn't be a matter of any consequence, really, but for the stupefying fact that, unless all signs fail, Nellie is in love with him! I repeat if you could see them together, you would understand how the thing can be at the same time incredible and true. It made me think of Bottom and Titania. Girls are such strange creatures — women are such strange creatures — I hope you don't mind my saying that most of you seem to have the most astounding, sometimes appalling ideals — from a man's point of view — of masculine good looks, and sense and behaviour. No doubt Eleanor thinks young Loring gloriously big and manly, gloriously capable of knocking her down and beating her and tying her to the bedpost! Well, perhaps that sort of treatment would make her happy; I feel sure that she would presently despise any civil, decent fellow who was her obedient and adoring slave. She wants a tyrant — or thinks she does. . . .

“I am boring you to death about my niece. The

truth is, I am fond of her. . . . One thing is important: do not suppose for a minute that Eleanor would take him for the sake of the establishment, and trips to Europe and Paris millinery and limousines and all that. She is not that kind; she could have set herself up long ago after that manner, had she chosen, but I want you to believe that Nellie is too fine, too high for any such squalid bargain. There has always been to me something splendid and flaming about her spirit—like a new sword. . . . You will think me a perfect mush of paternal sentiment, or else you will accuse me, as you have before, of writing letters to you by way of literary exercise. . . .”

And so forth and so on. So strong is habit, it may be Cook did half consciously turn and shape some of the above sentences while he sat watching; and listening—for shameful to admit, he did listen—when scraps of the young people’s talk floated back.

“You know you just wanted to keep me sticking around waiting for you, to see how I’d stand it,” he heard young Amzi say acutely; “you were kind of trying me out, now weren’t you?”

Nellie gave him a glance cool and flashing as the rapier to which her uncle likened her in his thought. The little man saw it with a kind of tentative relief; it was more natural, more like Nellie, than that other dove-eyed business, he told himself. “No, I knew how you’d act,” she said; “you’d act like a big man out of patience.” Her shrug conveyed both decision and indifference. “Couldn’t be helped. I simply have to take my time dressing; I always want to look perfectly all right when I go out with a man—”

“Do, huh?”

“Yes. My uncle isn’t painfully particular or

Miss-Nancy-ish, you know, but he *knows* when people look right, just the same."

"Oh, *him!* I — I thought you meant *me.*" The car lurched; Mr. Loring must have given the wheel a twitch inadvertently.

"Oh, you, too, of course," said Miss Maranda in matter-of-fact tones — too carefully matter-of-fact, the alert student of life and manners behind her thought, stretching his ears for every slightest variation from her normal key. "But my uncle is very observant — much more so than most men. He sees everything — little things and all."

"Well, I suppose that's his job," said Amzi tolerantly. "Seems funny for a man. I've never read any of his stories — I can't read novels. They're all guff, you know. I always fall asleep. But I know he's bright all right. I can tell by the way he talks — not that talk he gave us at commencement — I can't listen to that guff — I mean the way he talks when he's just talking. He's got a kind of way of saying things that's exactly like Billy Evans — you know that show that was here last winter, *His Royal Nibs*, don't you remember?"

"I don't believe I saw that."

"You ought to have. It was great. Evans was their funny man, you know. He's a little fellow, too, rather on the same order as your uncle; they say he's one of the best comedians on the stage to-day. And you know it's just like your uncle; the things he says aren't so funny, it's just his way of saying them. Every time he opens his mouth he gets a laugh! But it was a good show anyhow. I like a good musical show, don't you?"

"Yes, ever so much."

"I take in every one of them that comes along. Pass up most of the others, you know — they're too slow for *me*. Shakespeare's pretty good sometimes, only it's not true to life. Nobody ever *talked* in poetry; that's what makes me tired. And then I can't stand the kind where they don't do a thing but sit around and hold a talk-fest. I mean like this fellow's plays — what's his name —?"

"Shaw?"

"Yeah. No! Some Dutch-sounding name —"

"Maeterlinck?"

"Yeah, I guess that's it — that's near enough, anyhow. They're all alike. I can't stand any of 'em. I want something with some go to it — something bright and snappy and up to date. I bet you do too, don't you?"

"Well, I — I like the other kind, too," Nellie submitted, with a return of her deprecatory air. And as Loring slowed down at the moment, tooling around a curve that needed all his attention, the girl sent a swift, questioning look rearward. "Uncle Marsh, are your ears burning? We've been talking about you?"

"Have you? I'll listen harder after this," retorted Cook. He read an expression half defiant, half wistful on her face that moved him, sympathetically. "Poor child, how afraid she is that I'll make fun of him!" was his first inward comment; his next in renewed irritation: "But what possessed her to let herself fall in love with him? It *can't* last — it's too impossible!" Aloud he inquired casually: "Where are we now? I've lost my bearings."

It seemed to be a new suburb of little, box-like houses built in rows among wide, unkempt stretches

of open ground that must have been pastures but recently. There were tall new electric-light poles, disconnected lengths of new sidewalks and new curbing, new sewers suddenly nosing out of banks of raw earth; the way they were following was a declassified thing, neither road nor street, all ruts, ridges, temporary culverts, surveyors' stakes, hummocks of sand, gravel and paving-stones, around and between which young Loring jockeyed the big car with a satisfying adroitness. "Why, it's Elmwood Avenue — tell him Elmwood Avenue," he said shortly and sidewise to Nellie, who herself had not recognised the locality. And in a minute or two, having arrived at a stretch of comparatively smooth going, he relaxed enough — though still with a vigilant eye ahead, and still speaking from the corner of his mouth — to add: "It's all new around here, but the city's growing like everything out this way, towards Elmwood, on account of the factories out here, you know. Eberlein Chair Company — Utopia White Lead — Ohio Valley Rolling Mills — they're all out at Elmwood, and a whole lot more, besides ourselves." He jerked a facetious gesture towards the cramped little cottages, before applying his whole mind to the wheel again. "It's not exactly a kid-glove neighbourhood, but it's all right — respectable people — they naturally settle around where their work is. Hello! I guess we'll have to wait till that gets by."

He manœuvred the automobile into position at the side of the road, pending the advance of a steam-roller that now hove in sight clamorously; behind it they could see the narrow way a very ant-hill for activity, picks, dump-carts, mules and men in ceaseless motion, and near at hand the labourers' coats and

dinner-pails were banked against a sort of mammoth portable Noah's-Ark wherein they stored their tools, Cook supposed; "Shamrock Construction Company, No. 4," he read stencilled on its slanting lids. Young Loring leaned back, and tapped him on the knee. "Say, maybe my old Dad didn't have the long head!" he said — or rather shouted, elevating his voice above the uproar of the oncoming steam-roller. He screwed up one eye, and nodded at Cook, shrewdly complacent. "Maybe the old man wasn't Johnny-on-the-spot! He came out here ten years ahead of everybody else, and started an ice-plant — the one he's going to show you this afternoon, you know; it's right out here at the end of this street — he had it all figured out how this part of town was going to grow, and beat 'em all to it. Bet you his whole outfit, ground, railroad-switch, buildings, stables and all — bet you the whole outfit didn't cost him the fifth of what these other fellows are giving for the land alone now!" Amzi Two drew back to observe the effect of his statement in triumphant expectation.

"Enterprising man, your father!" bellowed Cook.

"Hey? Yeah, he's enterprising all right. Why, what d'ye think?" said the son, leaning over again, and again tapping the other's knee by way of emphasis; "they were going to soak him a big assessment for this road improvement, the city was, you know — there was graft in it for somebody, of course — but Dad headed 'em off. He just went around and got some of the other property owners interested so they'd go in with him, and then went to the authorities and says, 'Here, gentlemen, we'll take hold and do this thing ourselves, and maintain it ourselves according to the regulations or requirements or what-

ever they are, laid down in the charter, and it don't need to cost the city a cent, all the same as if it was a private road in somebody's grounds.' That was pretty straight talk, you know, and it was all in the papers — Father took care of *that* — and the councilmen, this John Dalton and the rest of these ward heelers that were looking for their rake-off, why, you see it kind of put 'em in a hole. Anyway, I expect every now and then they know they've got to do something to try and keep solid with the respectable element —" The steam-roller was abreast of them by this time, and Mr. Loring's lungs, adequate as they were to most occasions, came off second-best in that competition. He finished the tale, Cook judged by the movements of his face, but all that the latter caught of it was a fragment here and there, indicating that Loring senior had carried his point and personally hired the contractor, and that the completed job was going to cost him and his associates some thousands less than "the city figures," and moreover that they were "getting value for every dollar they put in."

"Yes, it takes enterprise to think of and manage schemes like that," said Cook, as the clatter subsided, and they resumed the road; the next instant he himself leaned eagerly to touch his niece's shoulder. "Nellie, I want you to look — not right now, he might see you — wait a minute and then look. That big man standing on the embankment to your right, talking to two of the workmen — he looks just like them, only he has his coat on — that's that fine old Irishman I met yesterday — the interesting old fellow I was telling you about, remember?"

"That's Devitt," said young Loring, turning to look in the direction, unmindful of Cook's warning.

“Mike Devitt. He runs the Shamrock Construction Company — owns it and runs it. He’s the one you know I told you Father made the deal with for the road. Did you say *you* knew him?” His face expressed his incredulous surprise, replaced, however, almost at once by a not very pleasing amusement. “Oh, yes, I remember! Little Chauncey, the Pride of the Precinct — that’s his pop. Well, well, to be sure!”

Nellie, after an incurious glance, remarked rather doubtfully that of course Mr. Devitt must be out of the ordinary — he was a rather rough-looking man, wasn’t he, to be at the head of any important work — it seemed queer.

“Well, he can’t go around on ditches and stone-piles dressed for a pink tea,” said Amzi, juggling the wheel expertly. “But anyhow old Mike’s a regular flannel-mouth; Irish as they make ’em. It’s not so very long, you know, since he was getting up at five o’clock when the whistle blew and starting off with his shovel and dinner-can and one of these little short black pipes they all smoke, just like the others. He wouldn’t mind doing it now, as far as that goes, I guess. Dad says he’s got plenty of sense, and a square man, too. I suppose Chauncey dear would faint dead away if he thought anybody remembered papa in those days.”

“I gather, Mr. Loring, that you think very highly of Chauncey,” said Cook.

They were moving slowly of necessity, but young Loring all but brought the car to a standstill while he directed a puzzled and inquiring scowl upon his guest. “Huh?” said he. Then his face began to clear; he chuckled deep in the throat, his little light eyes clos-

ing together in thorough enjoyment. "The way you said that I thought for a minute you were in earnest. You do remind me an awful lot of Billy Evans — I guess you've seen him in *His Royal Nibs*, you know where he comes on with the red whiskers and the tomato-can tied on over one ear, and the first thing he does is to hit his hand against the stove? It's supposed to be red-hot, of course, and somebody says to him that fool way people do: 'Oh, did you hurt yourself?' and he says: 'Oh, no; I was just petting the stove.' You said that just like him." He turned to his steering once more, still chuckling. "Why, you've got me right, Mr. Cook; I just love Chauncey!" And, being obliged at this point to halt a second time while two or three loads of sand deployed across the road, he screwed around to say, seriously now: "Say, that fellow's phony, that's what he is, phony all the way through — phony brains, phony education, phony everything. You know what I mean, don't you? I mean he's all *front*. He'll kind of con you along — if you don't *know* him — into thinking there's something *to* him, and there isn't! Not a thing! He couldn't deliver the goods to save his neck. That kind makes me tired." He paused, eyeing Cook to note the effect of this lucid exposition of his views.

The author had understood enough at least to be roused and interested; Amzi's remarks, all unknown to himself, might shed a light on both young men. "Well, you know him, and I don't," Cook said. "He certainly is a very unusual looking fellow, with that poetic head, and that limp. I was rather impressed."

"All *front*, I tell you," repeated the other, roughly. "Limp nothing! He didn't have to limp — unless

he had a sore corn or something. There's nothing the matter with his legs, or his feet either — anybody up there could have told you *that*. I'll bet you anything he read up in some book about some celebrity that was lame, so he thought *he'd* be lame! Limp nothing!"

The novelist chuckled in his turn. "I wish I had time to cultivate T. Chauncey!" he declared.

"Do, huh? Well, you'd find him just like what I'm telling you. That kind makes *me* tired."

"They would me, too," said Nellie warmly.

"Would, huh?" said Amzi, looking down on her with a kind of caressing mockery. "You know a lot about it, don't you?"

"Oh, of course, a man is ever so much better able to judge people than any woman can ever be, but I know I wouldn't like anybody that was such a goose. What does he want to look sick for?" Miss Maranda asked disdainfully. "It's too silly. *I* like strong people. Do you know that's what your name means? It means *strong*."

"It does? How do you know?"

"I looked it up in the Bible — in the Concordance, that is. Amzi's a Bible name, and it said it meant strong," said Nellie, not meeting his eyes, though speaking in an impersonal style — too impersonal by far, her uncle said to himself grimly. The young man looked at her, his face lit by an ancient fire. The automobile yawed widely, and he recalled himself.

"Strong? I — I guess they got me right," he stammered, bending his mind and hands to their task, one would have guessed by main force.

They crossed some railway tracks, and a step far-

ther on, the road which hereabouts was nearing completion brought up in a weedy and dusty little vale, among odds and ends of dilapidated fencing and plank sidewalk, and clumps of haggard vegetation, half-grown ailanthus trees, and wastes of wild clover. All the senses were vividly aware of sawdust and cinders and fodder and machinery and horses. In the middle of the landscape there appeared a big, spraddling, temporary-looking structure, sheathed in corrugated iron with a wooden stoop at one corner, a platform-scales in front of it, a smokestack at the far end, and to the rear a gigantic coop, cage, crib — the novelist could think of no name absolutely describing it, as he gazed, many feet higher than the building alongside, miraculously enclosing a myriad cascades of water. It dropped from tray to tray in straight and ordered sheets ceaselessly, supplying an accompaniment to every sound of the neighbourhood with its insistent liquid rustle, defying the intelligence by suggesting a cube of water on end, braced about lightly with wooden frames. Amzi Two being occupied with steering a course to the platform, Garry eagerly enlightened the visitors.

“It’s where they cool the water off before they run it inside — I *think* that’s what it’s for, anyhow,” he said. “That’s what they told me. I come out here with the car for the boss, every day.”

“City water?”

“Sure. But it’s filtered inside somewhere. It’s an elegant modern plant, the latest things, sanitary machinery and everything,” Garry assured them loyally. “All of Mr. Loring’s are.”

Cook, who now discovered that he had been expecting white tiles, marble tanks, brass pipes, plate-glass

— something, in brief, between a plumber's show-room and an aquarium, stared at the corrugated iron exterior of the elegant modern plant and at its barn-yard-like environment in amused curiosity. The scarred and blistered door opening on the stoop bore a sign relating that here was the Office; and emerging from it, they beheld Amzi senior, stout and clean, wiping his ruddy brow and the inside band of his straw hat, smiling upon them with all the strong lines of his face drawn into genial welcome.

CHAPTER VI

“ . . . Mr. Loring the elder is the personification of American, self-made, commercial success — our favourite slogan ‘ Make good ’ put into flesh,” wrote Cook in that letter of which we have already had a glimpse. “ Mind you, I’m not saying this in any spirit of condescension. He and his ice-factories may be uncomely and inæsthetic and crassly utilitarian, crassly devoted to the trade of money-getting, but by virtue of those very qualities, they are our most characteristic national product, and I, for one, admire and respect them. It’s a big thing to create a new type, and we’ve done it! We may not have any distinctively American art or science — nothing that can be symbolised anyway — but we’ve got the American Business-Man and nothing exists or ever has existed just like him. Most of our writer fellows hold him up for a sordid, selfish, ruthless grubber; I see him as true a pioneer as our forefathers, animated by the same adventurous idealism. . . .

“ We went into the Office which, before seeing the place, I had been foolish enough to suppose would be on the order of the directors’ room at a bank where I was once suffered to penetrate. This, on the contrary, was a box about ten or twelve feet square with a cannon-stove, a high desk and a high stool, a low desk and a swivel-chair, a calendar and a cuspidor. There was a rickety flight of three or four steps in

one corner with a door opening at the top, leading off into some unguessed territory. And from thence ever and anon we heard a high, whining whistle, the clank of chains, and a measured crashing. Mr. Loring interpreted these Dante-esque sounds as 'the pneumatic hoist letting go.' And seeing my interest which, I believe, gratified him as genuine interest always does a man whose own heart is wholly in his work, he added: 'We're strictly a business proposition here, Mr. Schultze, nothing fancy, or the kind you people that write care about, I warn you. But I thought you might like to see it, just for curiosity.'

"I told him I had been in business myself, as a book-keeper, before I took to writing.

"'Uh-huh,' says he, eyeing me searchingly. 'How did you happen to quit?'

"Upon my explaining that I found I could make more at the other trade, and liked it better, he nodded and remarked thoughtfully — and most truly — that it was all a gamble with most young fellows, and they were lucky when they found out what they could do early, and stuck to it. Perhaps he had the ordinary wage of a bookkeeper in mind and wanted, not unnaturally, to make a comparison, for he next asked in a perfectly inoffensive manner as one business-man to another, how much it cost me, on the average, to get out a book? When I told him that it had never cost me anything as the publisher attended to all that, his face expressed some doubt as to either my sanity or the publisher's, I don't know which, but he judiciously dropped the subject. His own book-keeper, to whom he presently introduced us, was a weird little creature with a great many beads and frizzes, and a preternaturally small waist, and high

heels and high colour — absolutely respectable, though, as anybody could see with half an eye! — whose rating was ‘A. Number one,’ he said heartily. Miss Schlochtermailer — this was her stupendous name — giggled amongst her frizzes and said with equal heartiness that she was sure she didn’t know why she wouldn’t try to do her work first-class, when she had such a nice boss that treated everybody so nice. I believe that both of them were in earnest, too, and that this was no mere passage of pretty speeches for effect. It developed during the conversation that Mr. Loring has never had a strike among his hands in the whole of his business career, or indeed any kind of trouble with them. But the fact is he doesn’t employ very many, notwithstanding the magnitude of his ice-making operations. For instance, at the Elmwood ‘plant’ where they can turn out upwards of three hundred tons a day — or maybe it was three thousand! — anyway, some unbelievable amount — there are only seven or eight hands regularly employed, setting aside the drivers, stablemen, etc. They all looked like very decent fellows, and nobody seemed to be having a particularly hard job, which may account in part for the evident good feeling between master and men. . . .

“. . . I might without impropriety, I suppose, in view of his own inquiries, have asked Mr. Loring how much it cost him to get out a ton of ice, ‘on the average,’ but I refrained. The man’s a millionaire, by just and legitimate methods, doubtless; and doubtless too, owing to his own integrity and industry — why not let it go at that? At any rate by this time I should probably have forgotten the figures or got them all muddled up — my brain reels with statistics. Lo-

ring himself turned out to be so much more interesting than the thing he does that I could not always keep my mind on his highly instructive discourse. I kept wondering what he was like when he was a young man just starting out, and what his choice of a wife had been, and what sort of a romance they had had, and what he expected of his son and whether the young gentleman would come up to the mark. To tell the truth, the prospects are not hopeful that way; he hasn't half his father's brains. I did ask the elder man what his son was going to do, and Amzi senior said: 'Oh, I guess likely he'll go in with me. But a young man's got to look around a little first, you know.' I detected a furtive uneasiness in his manner, all the more noticeable because so foreign to him.

"... They get the ammonia that they do the freezing with in the form of an incredibly compressed gas in tanks hermetically sealed up, and let it out as they want it. Each tank costs twenty-five dollars, and if they have good luck with them they last two or three months, for they can condense this surprising stuff and use it over again. I lost some important things he said at this point about how much each tank weighed, and how many times it could be used, and the danger of its leaking out through some pin-hole and volatilizing on its own hook to the detriment of everybody in the vicinity — I say I lost most of this because, while maintaining an air of rapt attention, I was really contemplating the picture he unwittingly called up of those precious tanks of ammonia in a cave underground or in rows in a courtyard like the jars of oil in the *Forty Thieves*. . . ."

The elder Loring, in fact, out of his honest pride in his work, had prepared a little sermon on the

whole duty of ice-making and the processes connected therewith, which he insisted on delivering before the inspection of the factory began. And that over, he led his not entirely enlightened audience up the flight of steps into a kind of monstrous attic whence issued those sounds Mr. Cook has described. "Now, I'm not going to tell you anything right now about what you see here," he announced, sweeping a gesture around the place; "because this is the *end*. Here's where the finished product, the ice, comes ready for shipment. Final stage. First I want to show you the apparatus we use for running off the ammonia as I was telling you, at intense heat, and returning it at intense cold, you recollect?"

Cook tried to look as if he recollected. And while the Ice-King strode on to a door opposite, and young Amzi and Nellie murmured together, sauntering somewhere in the rear, he gaped around at the great empty loft. As the depot for the "finished product" it seemed as if it ought to be cold, but it was scarcely even cool, the outside air and sunshine entering freely through a number of barn-like windows in either gable. The floor was paved with a rough mosaic of what looked like oblong boxes set on edge, each one having a counter-sunk handle in the side exposed; they were moist and a little slippery. Along one side there ran two big cast-iron pipes, one of them coated either with a thick rime of frost or a deposit of salt, the novelist was not sure which; he dimly recalled some mention of a "saline solution." Instead of a horde of overalled or half-naked workmen, such as the word factory brings before the imagination, there was only one man in sight, stationed at the other end of the garret, too far away for Cook to see

what he was doing. Indeed, at the moment, he was lounging with folded arms, not doing anything at all, though with a casual eye turned on some strands of wire cable travelling the length of the room at shoulder-height. As Cook looked on, he indifferently diverted his gaze to the party, and must have exchanged some signal with his principal, for the latter called out with an arresting movement of the hand: "'S all right, Tom, I don't want that now. When we come back'll be time enough. I'll let you know *when*."

Tom nodded; and with these cabalistic words, Mr. Loring peremptorily motioned to his guests to follow. As they passed through the door and began the ascent of more steps, there arose behind them the same banshee screech they had heard before, accompanied by the same reverberating crash.

"Set 'em up in the other alley!" said young Amzi facetiously.

"She certainly does make a lot of noise when she lets go," his father assented with an appreciative grin.

"Is that what you were telling that man to do?" Cook asked.

"That man? What man? Oh, you mean Tom. No, I was telling him about something else I've had fixed up. Thought maybe it might entertain you and the young lady. You'll see it as we come back," said Amzi senior; and he squinted roguishly. "Now, then, Mr. Crooks, you want to keep your eye on this set of pipes, because those over there are on the back-track—I mean to say that's where the freezing-fluid has done its work, and it's simply being cleaned and returned. You want to follow it in the proper

— er — rotation, y'see. Up these stairs now — this business ain't like most businesses, you kind of begin at the top instead of the bottom — hey? Ha-ha! Now in these coils at this side — look out, don't touch 'em! — is where the cooling process commences —” He kept on talking, pointing out, explaining, Cook listening accommodately, if without any very clear comprehension. The young people had by this time ceased to make any pretence of attention; they trailed behind, shamelessly unheedful, occupied with each other.

The exposition drew towards a close on the ground-floor in the engine-room, which, as Mr. Loring discriminately remarked, was too much like any other engine-room to demand close study; and it was here that they encountered the only other hands besides Tom to be seen about the place, namely, an engineer and fireman, neither of whom, as Cook noticed, was apparently overburdened with work.

“This machinery of yours is nothing short of miraculous to a person like me, Mr. Loring,” he said honestly; “you see I can't take in all of your explanations. It looks to me as if all these mechanical devices attended to themselves and minded their own business, going ahead and making ice without help or management from anybody!”

“Well, I guess there hasn't been any machine invented yet that will quite do that,” said the other with a laugh; “we've got all the latest appliances, of course. I believe in that, you bet! There's that automatic stoker now. It's the best on the market. I ought to know, for I've tried out a dozen of 'em. It costs money, but anything that saves labour, saves time, saves materials, will bring you out ahead in

the long run. If anybody gets out anything better, why, I'll scrap this stoker and get the new one. That's my principle. I don't care how much I spend, I'm going to have the best. Talk about competition! Competition's never worried *me* any. All you've got to do is to see that your product is better than anybody else's. That'll knock competition galley-west."

Cook regarded the best automatic stoker on the market with due respect. It hitched along a sort of trolley, pausing at intervals with uncanny deliberation to tilt itself and discharge a ration of slack coal into a reservoir which impulsively opened at that precise moment. Loring stood by, with his hands in his pockets and chin sunken into his collar, following its movements with an appraising eye.

"There! That's sheer magic to me!" ejaculated the author. "It's something like another machine I saw recently up in the power-house at Niagara — a thing that got up and oiled a certain crank or cog every now and then, and then went and sat down again till the next time."

Amzi One bestowed on him a rather peculiar side-glance. "Did, hey?" said he; "some machine that! This one has to have a man feed and set it. I guess I'll have to get some of your story-books, Mr.— Er —, I guess you're quite a writer."

"Oh, come now, Mr. Loring, you know I didn't mean that description to be taken too literally," retorted the little man, good-humoured and unabashed. They both began to laugh. It was in a curious good-fellowship — curious, considering their several characters — that they started back through the factory. We have seen something of what Mr. Cook thought of his companion; what the latter thought of Mr. Cook

he expressed over the dinner-table that evening. "That little Snooks, or whatever his name is, is a smart little fellow, son," said he; "he's a capable man! I know a capable man when I see one."

On this return trip, in fact, under the spell of Cook's talent for companionship, the elder Loring became quite communicative. He touched on his own life history; how he had been born and raised up here in Madison County on a farm — no, not a poor boy, his folks were well off — he had brothers and sisters living up there on the home place, and around the neighbourhood now, and they all lived nice and had nice farms. He just didn't want to stay in the country when he was a young fellow. Came down here just after the Centennial, when he was about twenty-one years old, and got a job first off in the freight-office of the B. and O. road. Then after two years or so of that, he went with the Columbian Express Company. Both these places kind of put him in touch with the draying and hauling business, you can see how they would, so pretty soon he went into it for himself, with a couple of wagons and teams, and a little office down on Third Street right where the commission-houses were. He made money at that. Then along come this big opening in the ice industry when they got to making it by machinery along about eighteen-seventy-nine, and he saw the possibilities in it, and jumped right in. And sure enough she began to boom, and she'd boomed ever since — oh, not without his getting down and scratching gravel, you bet! You can't ever get something for nothing — hey, ain't that so? People got the idea that there must be easy money in the ice business because water was about as cheap as air, and all you had to do was freeze

it; but if they'd try it once, they'd find out there was a good deal more to it besides that.

Cook agreed that there was a great deal more to it. "Managing the men, I should think, would be of itself, no slight job. Altogether in all your stables and factories there must be an army of them."

"Well, no, not so many — except of course in hot weather like this when we have to have a day and night shift on the engines, and more pullers and more delivery-wagons out." He gave Cook a few figures which, as has been seen, the novelist afterwards quoted. "But the men aren't the problem — not especially. Got to have 'em tolerably steady and sober, that's all. I never have any trouble with the men. They haven't got any union, for one thing — not that that would make any difference to *me*," said the Ice-King a little truculently. He jingled a fistful of coins in either pocket. "I can beat any union hands down. Come to think of it, the engineers *are* unionised — I'd forgotten about 'em, that shows how much I think of the unions!" he said with a grunt of amusement. "I always say to those fellows when they come to me for a job — I deal with every one of 'em direct, you know; I don't want any superintendents or Jack-in-offices mixing in — I always say to 'em: 'Look here, my place is open to everybody. I don't care whether you're in the union or out of it. I know how to treat a man square without any union holding a club over me, or him either. If I didn't know how to act square, I wouldn't be where I am to-day. Now —' I says to 'em — 'if you work for me, you've got to work alongside other men that may be union and may not, that's none of your business. I'm hiring you to attend to *my* business, and

if you don't like my ideas, you don't need to stay. I treat you all alike; you get your wages right on the dot, and if you get hurt or sick or in trouble, I'll see you through. There ain't any union that'll get you higher pay for the same amount and kind of work, or fairer treatment than I'll give you, as long as you do your duty. Now are you willing to come on this understanding?' Most of 'em are, and most of 'em stick. Because they find I'm telling the truth and acting up to my word."

"I suppose they are mostly men of some intelligence."

Loring grunted again. "Intelligence — no! They don't have to be overly intelligent," he said, not without scorn. "And they aren't — the run of 'em aren't. An engineer, of course, has to understand the machinery; they've got to have a license. But one of these pullers, like Tom, for instance, *he* don't need any headpiece — just enough to learn when to turn on the power and dump a cake of ice. Anybody could do it — *you* could do it, if you had the muscle, and it don't even take a great deal of that, since we've been using this compressed air system." They were nearing the scene of Tom's operations as he spoke, and Mr. Loring dropped his voice to add: "You'll see him work the hoist directly, and if you don't think he earns his two dollars a day about as easy as anybody could — practically unskilled labor, mind you! — if you don't think he's got a snap for a man of that calibre, I'm a Dutchman! Here, this way. Duck your heads, she's going over!"

The long sagging cables, obedient to some mysterious agency high in the dusky rafters above them, were moving in concert crabwise from side to side

over an area perhaps twenty feet wide, the entire length of the room. Young Amzi fearlessly seized hold of them and lifted them over Nellie's head for the fraction of a second, as she dashed across the space, stooping, laughing, tossing him a brilliant glance like a flower.

"Good work!" said Amzi, following her at leisure. "You don't have to stoop, Sport!" he advised Cook in jocose vein, as the latter prepared to join them. "Even if it knocked you over, you wouldn't have very far to fall!" He smote the little author a staggering clap on the back, and burst into Gargantuan laughter. Nellie flushed, with an apprehensive look at her uncle; and the elder Loring began to expostulate, though himself obliged to restrain a chuckle.

"Here, here, here, son! I don't believe you know Mr.—this gentleman well enough for that kind of a joke —"

But Cook's good-humour was invincible. "Never mind, sir, never mind the joke," he interposed. "Just don't let him hit me like that in earnest —" And here the pneumatic hoist setting up its high-pitched note of warning, effected a diversion.

They watched it swing a metal casket across in its powerful claws, poise an instant over a steep shiny-wet toboggan-slide, and thunderously let fall a cake of ice; it swept dizzily down the slope, vanishing at the far end with another concussion. "They weigh three hundred pounds," Mr. Loring said. "Nice and clear, wasn't it?"

"Beautifully clear! I was just thinking it was like a great glass box," said Cook. "It had no look of being solid."

"Um-huh. Well, I *have* seen things put inside it,"

said the other, sly anticipation suddenly appearing on his features. He nodded significantly to the puller; and presently with another clang, another wail of escaping air, there boomed down upon the runway and fled past them another three hundred pounds with a dark object embedded in the middle of it, at sight of which Cook gave an exclamation.

"*What!*" he shouted, rushing to peer after it.

"I told 'em to save out that cake and send it up to the house for you," said Amzi One, smiling, well-pleased. "You'll see it again when you get home."

"Mr. Loring," said Cook solemnly. He paused, swallowing with a mighty effort, even some slight contortion of the facial muscles. An onlooker, seeing him in pantomime, might have interpreted his expression as that of a man choking with laughter which he was determined to suppress. "Mr. Loring, my work has seldom had a — a token of appreciation that I — I value m-more — ahem — ho, ha — *ahem*, *hem*—!"

"Well, I haven't ever read any of your works, you know," said the Ice-King quickly. "I went to a bookstore and asked for the latest, and they told me that was it. Thought maybe it would be a kind of a unique experience for you to see it that way, right in the centre of a block of ice. Did you notice you could read the title plain as day? That shows you how clear our ice is."

"Yes, it *is* a unique experience," said the author; and again he halted abruptly. He took out his handkerchief, and used it with astonishing noisy vigour. "I — I really don't know what to say — ahem — ho, ha — *ahem!* Anybody that *buys* one of my books is doing me a favour, you know, but *this* is — really —

I — aho, *hem!* Yes, I saw the title distinctly. It's a volume of short stories that I've been told needed cold storage, or some other preservative — eh? Oh, ho, ha, ha, ha!" and now Mr. Cook did give way to laughter most freely; he laughed till the tears came into his eyes, joined by the other man, who observed with a wink that he'd certainly have to get that book and read it himself, if it was as gamey as its author hinted.

Miss Maranda did not laugh. She stood silently, rather red in the face, intently prodding the ferule of her parasol into a knot-hole in the floor. And neither did the younger Amzi laugh, being too much occupied with her to take note of what was going on elsewhere. It was Eleanor, however, who, raising her head at last and avoiding her uncle's eyes as she stared absently through the windows at that end of the loft, was the first to perceive that something "unique" appeared to be taking place outside also.

"Do look at those men!" she said. "They're tearing this way like mad. There! One of them just shouted something. Do you suppose anything's happened?"

Amzi Two bent down to look past her. "Just set off a blast probably, and they're beating it to get out of the way," he suggested.

"No, no, they've finished all the blasting work — at this end anyhow," said his father. He looked in turn; they heard the men's voices; Miss Schlochtermajer shrilly responded to the outcry.

Cook did not stop to think about it at the time, but he remembered afterwards with a certain admiration the older Loring's prompt activity, the economy, sureness and despatch of his every movement whether of mind or body. While the rest of them were still

hanging irresolute, idly guessing, he was at the door, he was in the office, he was asking, answering, giving orders. By the time they reached it, he was talking imperatively into the telephone; he crooked his finger and the bookkeeper ran to him; he uttered a word, and everybody in sight sprang to the allotted task or post. Garry and the automobile sped down the road at punishable speed; bottles of whiskey began to appear from nowhere; somebody was pounding ice. A big negro man leaning against the door, getting his breath in gasps with the sweat rolling down his face, answered questions excitedly.

“Yessuh, yes’m, Ah run all the way, mighty neah er half-mile — yessuh, close ontuh er half-mile — they ain’t no telefoam nea’ah ’n this yer one. Yessuh, yes’m, Mistuh Devitt done had er stroke — pears lak’ it mus’ be er stroke. He done jus’ give er groan, ‘Uh-uh!’ jus’ go lak’ that, an’ drap right ovah whar he was standin’. Yes, boss — no, suh, Ah dunno wher’er it was sun-stroke or his hea’t, er what it was. He jus’ give er groan, ‘Uh-h-h!’ an’ jus’ crimple right up whar he was standin’ — yessuh, yes’m —”

CHAPTER VII

SO timely and well-taken were Mr. Loring's measures that a doctor, a limber sharp-eyed young fellow, arrived with his kit of forbidding-looking tools ready for action, some minutes ahead of the automobile bearing Mr. Devitt. And happily, after all, the flurry proved to be without so serious a cause as everybody had at first feared; the hero was "nothing like dead, nor thinking about it," as Miss Schlochtermajer later observed. By the time he reached the factory, supported on the floor of the tonneau between two stalwart, clay-besmeared gentlemen from his ranks, he had almost regained consciousness; indeed, these latter testified that he had never entirely lost it, having from the beginning dazedly but with firmness objected to having his boots taken off when one Samaritan volunteered for that service. "Seemed like he was plumb set aginst it, so Tony just had to leave 'em be," one of the men explained apologetically.

Tony, who needed only a scarlet sash to be the picture of a Sicilian brigand, corroborated the statement with many amiable nods and smiles. "Da boss he ees come — a all ri' queek now? I guess yess?" was his cheerful conviction.

"Sure!" said the young doctor heartily, after one rapid glance into the stricken man's lead-coloured face. The spectacle of it, taken with his heavy breathing and uncertain eyes, was still sufficiently

alarming to the lay onlookers; but the doctor's authoritative coolness steadied them all. He knelt down by the couch which Eleanor had hastily improvised out of automobile cushions and rugs, rolling up his sleeves, giving directions. "Easy now! No, don't let his head down flat — just a little higher — so! That's it, Miss — that's right!" he said approvingly to the girl, who showed herself admirably collected, efficient and quick to understand. "No, I don't want the ice. Take his other arm, one of you. Now this way — work it this way, see?"

It was Tony who helped him; the other man, the negro labourer, the bookkeeper, Cook, the two Lorings stood around the room helplessly, watching. "If you want anything, just say so. Just say what it is," Amzi senior said at intervals, with his hand on the telephone.

"Better get outside, and let him have whatever air there is in here, hadn't we?" said Cook. The younger Amzi immediately adopted the suggestion; he went outside and lit a cigarette; the chauffeur joined him and they talked in low tones.

"He'll come around in a minute," the doctor said watchfully, not ceasing the massage.

"Take-a da boot — eh?" asked the Italian, hopefully.

Mr. Devitt moved his head; he essayed to raise it.

"Look out, he's coming 'round," said the doctor again. And to be sure, the patient spoke; he also fixed his eyes frowningly on all their faces in succession, fastening at last on Nellie's.

"What the devil ye want me boots off for? I don't want 'em off, I'm telling ye!" said Mr. Devitt.

Miss Schlochtermailer uttered a slight scream and

then began to giggle hysterically. "Oh, my, if that ain't the *biggest* relief!" she exclaimed.

"All right, sir," said the doctor, soothingly. "Just don't you try to talk for a minute. Drink this. See if you can't drink this now."

"Here, you mind the telephone," Amzi One commanded the bookkeeper. "If you want anything, just tell her. She'll get it for you or telephone, you know, for anything you want," he reiterated, and went outside too, and lit a cigar.

"Oughtn't I to open his collar?" asked Nellie.

"Be Heavens, ye'd have to put one on me first!" the sick man answered her unexpectedly. His voice and grin were feeble, but his eyes had assumed a normal expression, and the effort he made to sit up was much stronger. Nellie began to laugh a little hysterically in her turn, and even the doctor chuckled as he restrained Devitt's movement.

"Here, now, don't get too brash. You'll have to lie still for a while yet. You've been sick, you know."

"Who? Me? Who're ye talking to anyways? Is it yourself, Tony? Where's the rest of the boys?"

"He'll be all right now," said the doctor aside to Nellie, and rose, dusting off the knees of his trousers. Sure enough, in another minute, Devitt seemed to come to himself completely and sitting up, propped against Tony's shoulder, asked what time it was, recognised the place and Mr. Loring, and vigorously expressed mingled annoyance, wonder, gratitude and apology.

"If this don't beat all! Did anybody ever hear the like? It's not as if I was a drinking man — I've always kept away from the stuff — anybody that knows me'll tell you that. 'Twas a touch o' the sun, doctor,

I don't know? This is the fine time o' day for *me* to be getting sunstroke, now ain't it? Ah, well, I'm not as young as I was, and that's the truth. Mr. Loring, sir, and Miss —" he made a deprecatory gesture — "I don't know your name, but I'm that obliged to ye! And I'm sorry I give ye so much trouble," said Michael earnestly.

Amzi the elder acknowledged the words by a brief inarticulate sound. But Nellie spoke out with her bright freedom which was yet somehow not familiar, not forward; it made one think of Viola, of Rosalind. "My name is Eleanor Maranda," she said. "And you haven't been any trouble at all, Mr. Devitt. And I really haven't done anything — none of us have — so you're not to think about it any more. Just think about taking care of yourself in this heat, and keeping well."

"That's right," the doctor said, looking up with a sagacious and warning wag of the head from the satchel which he was now repacking. "You ought to be careful —" He made some abstruse references to "cardiac action," "sclerosis," and so on, and finished with another general caution. "Not too much exertion, not too much excitement, you know. Better rest for a day or so after this. I suppose there's somebody here that can take him to his home? He'd better not attempt it by himself," he added, looking around, with a glance, perhaps involuntary, towards the big automobile.

Nellie's eyes followed his, and then turned upon young Amzi. But it appeared that both Lorings, father and son, considered the incident closed as far as concerned them and their good offices. The younger man shifted his cigar, and looked off, delib-

erately unresponsive even to Nellie's mute appeal; the elder said loudly and jovially that of course that would be all right — Devitt could stay here as long as he wanted to, till whenever he felt equal to moving — going back down-town, that is — certainly that would be all right. He looked at his watch, and exclaimed with surprise that it was only five o'clock — only just five — this whole thing, this whole excitement hadn't been more than fifteen minutes! Seemed longer, didn't it? Well, all's well that ends well, hey? Certainly it would be all right for Mr. Devitt to stay until he got good and rested up. Of course there would be somebody around the place — there was always somebody around.

Cook was about to offer his services, when Nellie intervened. "Never mind," she said, colouring hotly in a kind of humane mortification which her uncle at least perfectly well understood. "I'll stay here. The men and I can manage very well; I believe we could take him home on the street-car —"

"Oh, you can't do anything like that, Nellie. You'd better not try anything like that. Now you leave it to me, or one of us — it'll be attended to —" Cook began; but his undertone was lost in Amzi Two's vehement growl of protest.

"*You!*" he said in an impatience flavoured with anger, even with contempt. "You don't know what you're talking about. It takes a woman to think she can boss things! *You* don't have to lug him around. Let some of his own men do it. They can take him home in one of their dump-carts if they can't find anything else — make up a bed in the bottom of it and it would be good enough. It won't be the first time he's ridden in one of 'em —" during all of which speech

— and there was more of it to the same effect — young Mr. Loring did not take the trouble to abate his naturally loud, heavy voice, in spite of Eleanor's urgently and distressfully significant face. Even Amzi senior looked momentarily perturbed; and Cook, for his part, was actually hoping that the sick man was still too sick to catch the meaning of this discussion, when Devitt spoke.

“I thank ye, Miss, but I couldn't think of it,” he said, not without dignity. The fact that he was merely an elderly Irishman of the working-class, sprawling on the floor in a blue denim shirt none too clean, with a worn old coat smelling of stale tobacco and perspiration, and a pair of old muddy brogans patched on the soles — these facts and details all at once passed from view. “If ye'll be so kind as to telephone my wife, and tell her gentle-like, not to scare her — if ye'll do that much more for me, 'tis more than I ought to be putting on ye, but I can't ever be even with your kindness anyways. And if Mr. Loring will leave me the loan of his floor to lay on till my boy Tim — Chauncey, that is — till he can get to me, there's no need for any of ye to bother your heads any more about me. I thank ye all.”

It was a dismissal. There seemed nothing for it but to do as he requested, and then take themselves off, leaving him to the care of his men, several of whom had now collected, some anxious, some stolid, some only inquisitive. Sudden quiet fell and they all made way when the ice monarch emerged; nobody ventured to question him. Cook followed slowly in a discomfort which no ironical reminders that it was not his business how humanely or inhumanely these Loring men acted, could alleviate. He wondered,

flinching, what these others thought, and wondered again, as he looked at them, to see that apparently they were not thinking at all; they seemed to take everything that was happening as a matter-of-course. A man — even their “boss” — was taken sick; he was looked after or he was neglected; he died or he got well; it was all on the knees of the gods — those gods who had allotted them their hard, dull lives, their poor, dull minds. Cook flinched again in a sudden torment of pity and self-abasement.

The evening whistles blew in the factories at Elmwood hard by; the crowd augmented as empty ice-wagons arrived one after another jingling stablewards, their crews volleying inquiries. Garry began to crank up. Young Amzi, gloweringly silent, waited on Eleanor who retreated at length, doubtful and reluctant. One divined that, left to her own desire, or had there been more women to back her up, the girl could not have been persuaded to abandon her patient; but Miss Schlochtermayer was already departing in a twitter, and this company of males daunted Nellie, for all her spirit. Her petticoated presence amongst them became somehow unnecessary, even meddlesome, an added burden. Still she hesitated, thereby pushing young Loring to the farthest verge of irritation.

“Come along! I tell you you can’t do anything more, you’re just in the way. A girl hasn’t any business around this kind of a place. What can *you* do for a sick man?” he said roughly. “He’s not so very sick anyhow — he’ll be all right directly — the doctor says so. You can’t kill that kind. Come *on!* You’re keeping everybody waiting.”

“I know — I’m coming,” said Eleanor meekly.

"I — I just wanted to be sure it was right to leave him." She broke away to appeal to the doctor. "Do you *really* think it's all right, doctor? Do the men know enough to take care of him? Will it be safe for us to go away before his son gets here?"

"Oh-h, *Lord!*" ejaculated Amzi Two, in exasperation.

"He won't have any return of that — that — whatever it was? I mean the heat won't affect him that way again?"

The doctor, who had taken Devitt's foreman aside and was addressing some parting injunction to him in a confidential voice, cocked an eye towards her, and made a species of negative grimace, slight but of emphatic meaning. "Heat won't hurt him. It wasn't the heat. He'd have had the same kind of an attack in zero weather. That trouble he has'll get him some day. But you needn't to worry about the heat," said he, jerked the ink into his fountain-pen, and went on writing out the road-contractor's name and address at the foreman's dictation, on a leaf of his prescription-book. "First of the month's time enough," he added liberally, in answer to some mumbled suggestion from the foreman. The elder Loring gave him a cigar.

"Had enough? Ready to come now?" Amzi junior wanted to know of Nellie, almost threateningly.

"Better obey, Nellie, before Mr. Loring gets a club," said Cook, in his pleasantest and simplest manner. Whatever the remark was meant to convey it passed over the younger Amzi and left him unscathed; the operation, Cook thought savagely, was comparable to sticking pins into a rhinoceros; but the older

man gave him an investigating side-glance, and ha-ha'd not quite spontaneously.

"Here now, son!" he remonstrated; "you let the young lady take her own time. What's the hurry?"

"I'm coming," said Eleanor in the submissive style that her uncle inwardly admitted "stumped" him.

"I don't want you standing around here for a lot of other men to stare at. I won't have it," the young man growled violently in her ear, as he helped her into the car; and Nellie smiled, not ill-pleased!

No more adventures befell them on the way home; and the ice-king set his guests down at their own gate with strong expressions of good-will, coupled with equally strong regrets when he heard that Mr. Cook was to leave for the "East" the next day. Not that Mr. Loring supposed his new acquaintance to be about to make the long and more or less hazardous journey to Bagdad or some other point in the Orient; to middle-western ears, the "East" means specifically the city of New York, and all roads lead thither.

"Well, now, that's a pity. I was hoping we were going to see a little more of you," he said sincerely. "I'd have liked to have you over at the house to dinner, but we'll have to let that go until the next time you're out this way, I guess. I'm pleased to have met you, Mr.—er—and I mean what I said about your book. I'm going to get it—I'm going to get all of 'em. Well, good-bye! Take care of yourself! Hey? Oh, yes—yes—" He took Cook's card with a faintly surprised look which, however, cleared up directly. "*The Oasis Club, West Forty-Fifth.*" "Why, yes, certainly, I'll hunt you up the next time

I'm on. Be glad to. Do you know —" he added with a half laugh — "do you know I hadn't any idea an author would have a card, or a regular place where you could find him — unless, of course, he represented some newspaper, or something of that sort. But after all, it's a business like any other business. Well, take good care of yourself!"

"'Bye!" said the other Amzi, offering his hand.

"What? Shan't I see you again before I go?" the novelist asked agreeably.

"Guess not."

"I thought you might be coming over?"

"Huh! No."

He parted from Nellie in similar fashion, with scarcely a word; they looked at each other. Cook groaned in spirit — he was very careful not to groan in the flesh! — to see that look. "Of course he won't come over while I'm still here — I might have known *that!*" he said to himself. "Nellie's coached him, or else he simply doesn't want to come when there's so little chance of seeing her alone. They seem to have a tolerably plain understanding already. Good Lord! But after that exhibition this afternoon, how *can* she —?"

Speculating gloomily, he followed Nellie up the walk; and coming down it they met a friend of the family, hurrying home from an informal summer call which, she assured them, had prolonged itself to this "scandalous" hour without her being conscious of it. "It was so delightfully cool and pleasant on your porch, and we were having such a nice chat, I didn't realise — Mercy, no, I couldn't stay to dinner, thank you so much! — Mr. Cook, I'm ashamed to look you in the face, I haven't read your last book! I'm going

to, of course, I can hardly wait — the minute I get time — Isn't it wonderful how many books there are? One can't get around *all* of them. Are you working now? It must be so interesting. I was just saying to Mrs. Maranda how much we all envied her, having a celebrity in the house!" She stopped for breath, smiling, a little excited, visibly awaiting some scintillating bit of repartee.

"Well-er-a celebrity? I'm afraid Mrs. Maranda — among others — wouldn't recognise me by that description — I'd be out of my class, you know, Mrs. Clapp —"

"Indeed you *wouldn't* be! We're all just as proud of you as we can be. How long are you —? To-morrow afternoon? You do make such flying visits. Mrs. Maranda told me she was afraid she couldn't get you to stay. She's so disappointed — she enjoys so having you here. And takes so much interest in your career! But she's a lovely woman anyhow — she *lives* for others! Oh, my dear —!" and here Mrs. Clapp turned to Nellie impulsively. "You are the *luckiest* to have somebody like that for a step-mother — the *sweetest* thing! And perfectly devoted to you. I wish you could hear the sweet way she talks about you. I can't help telling you. You know — or *you* know, Mr. Cook, with all your wonderful study of the world and human nature, that she's very, *very* unusual!"

"Yes, she is unusual. I realise that we ought to be thankful that she is so unusual," said Marshall, gravely.

"And she's such a sufferer, too! I've known Mrs. Maranda for years, and I always say that there isn't anybody like her," Mrs. Clapp said with warmth. "I

must *fly* — it's perfectly awful my staying this way. Give my love to Fannie — so sorry she's sick."

Mrs. Maranda was alone on the porch, languidly fanning in her wheeled-chair; and in reply to Cook's surprised and concerned inquiries after Fannie, told them that she had gone to lie down. "She thought that she had a headache coming on. All that talk about the heat frightened her into it, I believe — you know poor Fannie's so nervous and imaginative, she goes to pieces at the least thing; and there's no use trying to reason her out of it. I've tried *that*. I made her go. She actually got me a little nervous, too, ripping and tearing at that dress. She hasn't a particle of self-control — Dear me, if she had ever had to go through what *I've* gone through! When she began to get into that state, I kept saying to her: 'Fannie, *do* stop! *Do* leave it alone! You're ruining it. I don't *want* you to work at it when you're in that hysterical condition.' So finally I persuaded her. I'm all worn out with her myself."

Eleanor made an inarticulate sound; then she went swiftly indoors and upstairs. Cook sat down and took a palm-leaf fan. "No wonder you're worn out, Juliet! The trouble is you're too sympathetic," he said gently. "You think too much of other people."

CHAPTER VIII

MRS. JULIET MARANDA, being of that feminine generation which was trained to a devout belief that the man of the house must be “entertained” every moment that he was in it, whatever his own desire and disposition, sat with her guest on the front porch until a late hour after dinner, “entertaining” him faithfully — and at times, perhaps, in ways she did not suspect. Cook had long ago explored every nook and corner of his sister-in-law’s mind — not a varied or extensive territory according to his probably prejudiced view; he believed that he knew exactly how much she would understand, exactly what she would think, feel, say under any given circumstances; and as a matter of fact his guesses seldom went astray. Withal she did not bore him; she was not a dull woman; Marshall had a theory that it did him good to exercise his faculty for listening sympathetically, or appearing to listen sympathetically, and it most unquestionably did him good to exercise that other faculty for throwing in small, amiable, guileless-sounding speeches that Juliet always innocently took at their face value. After this fashion he enlivened the two hours for himself, and was almost too successful in creating the illusion of companionship for Mrs. Maranda!

“I hate to go — it *is* so delightful to have a congenial person to talk to,” she said at length, rising with a sigh. “But you know how it is. I *have* to

go to bed at a certain hour. What a nuisance a person's health can be! When you have to take care of yourself all the time, the way I do, I mean. But then, if I *didn't*, I'd be a constant trouble to everybody, and that's the only reason I *do*! For myself I don't care. I'm used to suffering — Oh, yes, I don't mind it at all!" Mrs. Maranda went on heroically as Cook uttered an inarticulate murmur of condolence. "I never talk about it. I try to keep it out of sight and out of mind as much as possible. But it is provoking when I have to leave an interesting talk like this and go to bed. You don't mind my not staying up longer with you, do you, Marshall? You know if I did, I probably wouldn't sleep one wink all night, and I can't stand that strain." She paused, and added impressively: "I only slept two hours last night!"

"*What!* That's very serious. Have you had the doctor?" Cook inquired anxiously.

"Gracious, no, Marshall! I wouldn't have the doctor for *that*. It's three dollars a visit, you know," said his sister-in-law with some asperity. "Some people would, no doubt — some people get nervous about themselves. Fortunately I have plenty of self-control."

Cook coughed. "Er — ah-h! Yes, to be sure —" He moved to open the screen-door for her.

"I really hate to go," Mrs. Maranda said again, lingering. "I wish you were going to be here longer. It's so nice. Women shut up in a house together get so tired of one another. I know every idea in Fannie's and Nellie's heads, both of them!"

"Do you? I wish I did!" said Cook, honestly enough. He had refrained from discussing Nellie's

affairs of sentiment with the older lady, whom Nellie herself would not dream of taking into confidence; knowing that, Mr. Cook would have considered it indiscreet, even disloyal and altogether beneath him to have opened the subject with Mrs. Maranda — however much he might reveal and whatever comments he might make to a certain other person! “Do they know every idea in yours, too?” he asked.

“The *girls*? No *indeed!*” cried out Mrs. Maranda, humorously shocked. “Why, Marshall, I thought you knew better than *that!* Girls never think of anything or anybody but themselves. No, I do all the thinking and planning for the house, and for every single person in it. The doctors have always tried to stop me; they always keep telling me not to shoulder *all* the responsibilities, but you know that isn’t my disposition. I’m one of those people that can’t be satisfied unless they are doing their whole duty. I told Doctor Lloyd that the other day when he was doing his best to persuade me to let things *go* a little, and he sat and looked at me for at least a minute perfectly silent — the *strangest* way! Then he all at once burst out: ‘Well, Mrs. Maranda, there aren’t so many people that “can’t be satisfied” in that way, as you think. You’re one in a thousand!’ ‘Oh, doctor,’ I said; ‘that’s all nonsense! There’re plenty of people that have as much sense of duty as I have — *plenty!*’ But he seems to think I’m wonderful. When he heard you were coming he asked me if you had ever put me in a book. I said: ‘Oh, Marshall wouldn’t do that!’”

“No, of course I wouldn’t!” said Cook, heartily.

“Of course not! That’s what I told him,” said the lady, a faint note of disappointment in her voice,

which caused Mr. Cook to smile villainously in the dark. She went in, and the author settled himself to the smoking of more cigarettes — innumerable cigarettes, one after another, stretched out at ease with his hands behind his head and his feet elevated to the porch railing, now that the formality required by Mrs. Juliet's presence could be abandoned. Thus he sat motionless and smoked and contemplated the stars until the sound of the door opening again drew his eyes to his niece Eleanor slipping gently out through it. "Hey?" said Cook, stirring lazily.

"Don't move, Uncle Marsh, don't get up. I thought I'd come out for a while. It's too hot upstairs to sleep." She perched herself on the railing, alongside his feet. "Don't look at me either, if you think it's too shocking. I'm just the same as usual, only I've got on a kimono instead of a dress. This isn't New York, so you needn't mind."

"Don't mind. Like it," said her uncle indistinctly through his cigarette. "Look nice — what I can see of you." Nellie was indeed only a slender white silhouette poised on the rail, her kimono clinging poetically to her long young figure; her arms were bare, her hair an irregular blot of darkness around the pale blot of her face. In this attitude and costume she did not suggest the ghost or fairy; hers was the springy yet substantial grace of a Diana. "Shake foot, eh?" said Cook, shifting the cigarette so as to hold out his right hand free. "Stick it out, Nell!"

She gave a sort of abstracted laugh, and put out her foot obediently. It was a thin, narrow foot, small-boned though not small, for Nellie was a tall woman; and it was handsomely cased just now in a silk stocking and a fanciful mule of black brocade with a high,

tapering scarlet heel; the thing dropped down and swung from her toe as Cook took the compact instep into his hand and wagged it caressingly. This was an old trick, left over from the days when, a lean, gloomy, dyspeptic lad of eighteen or so, he had played with the baby girl, and made goblin faces, and told her nightmare tales without ever succeeding, to his disappointment, in frightening her; Eleanor was of a good spirit. She bent down and fitted the slipper on again, as he released her foot at the conclusion of this rite, which of old had always marked and consummated their treaties of peace.

"You gave me these, do you remember? You sent them to me from some gorgeous Fifth Avenue shop last Christmas. I think they are so pretty. You always seem to know exactly what everybody likes."

"That's my job," said the other, lightly.

Nellie leaned against the post, staring at the sky for a while in silence. A clock somewhere in the neighbourhood struck. "Twelve," she said, counting. There was another silence. "Fan's been horridly sick."

Cook exclaimed in real sympathy this time: "Pshaw! That's too bad! Oughtn't we to get somebody?"

"A doctor, you mean? She *won't*, you know. I didn't want to fret her. She's a little bit better now. Headache. It's perfectly *racking*. I've been bathing it for her," said Nellie disconnectedly. Then after another gap of silence, she suddenly announced with fierce emphasis: "I *hate* to have Fannie sick! I can't *bear* it. She's so — well, I *hate* it, that's all! It's — it's beastly!"

Her uncle grunted his entire acquiescence.

“There’s no *need* of it. It doesn’t *have* to be,” said Nellie. “That’s one of the things that make me so angry — and I can’t *do* anything! Fannie thinks she *ought* —! But she doesn’t *have* to — she doesn’t *have* to at all —”

Her vehemence seemed to expect denial or argument; but Cook, who could easily enough fill out the gaps in these broken statements, embarked on neither. That refrain of “Same old thing” echoed through his mind. He remembered the youthful bitterness of his own revolt when he was Eleanor’s age; and her recognition of helplessness touched him. That “I can’t *do* anything!” revealed her in the clutch of Circumstance, not “*fell*” indeed — a word which would have been ludicrously high — but incredibly potent and silly. In his own case, there had been the advantage of his sex; one way or another he could always escape; and for him there was never the truly distressing spectacle of a Fannie. It was the most unhappy comedy; but how or when, if ever, would the curtain fall on it? The grave thing was its possible effect on Eleanor’s character — a good character at the start, high and generous, and backed by a good intelligence, he thought. For all her fire, she displayed, by and large, a self-control that surprised him, that he could admire; as, for instance, at this moment, when he knew it was costing her a strong effort not to lash out in denunciation of the feeble, yet astonishingly effective tyranny under which she and Fannie lived. Whatever it was that contributed to withhold her — pride, sense of humour, consideration for himself, the spirit of *noblesse oblige* — whatever it was, Marshall liked his niece for it. But how much longer could she keep up this sort of thing, particularly when there

was a way out of it—a way that, worse luck, obviously suited her? He moved uneasily, and Nellie began to speak again.

“That was rather funny this afternoon, wasn’t it?” she said with the tentative air that Cook had grown to recognise in mixed impatience, pity and amusement. “That about the ice, I mean. Freezing your book into a cake that way.”

The author chuckled involuntarily. “Yes, that *was* rather funny,” he admitted.

“Mr. Loring *meant* it to be. He did it for a joke, of course you know that, Uncle Marshall?”

“Yes. Yes, indeed!”

“Of course he’s never had anything to do with a man like you before. He—he doesn’t know anything about people that write. I suppose he doesn’t care for books—novels. I—I know the other Mr. Loring doesn’t. Business-men don’t as a rule,” Nellie was explaining when all at once her own fluency seemed to disconcert her. “But *you* know, anyway—you know about everybody,” she ended suddenly.

Mr. Cook had no reply for this compliment; during the pause that ensued he lit another cigarette amid certain panicky forebodings which were not without foundation, as Nellie’s next remark proved.

“Oh, Uncle Marshall, I wish you would *say* something! You just sit there and *think*!”

“I—I wasn’t thinking, Eleanor,” stammered her uncle guiltily; and then they both laughed constrainedly, yet it cleared the air somehow. The girl went on talking with more of her natural freedom and confidence.

“I suppose you thought it was dreadful of them—of Mr. Loring—to go off and leave that poor man

with his sun-stroke. I suppose if it had been *you*, you would have sent him safe home in the machine."

Cook humanely tried to say what he believed she wanted him to say. "Oh, I don't know, Nellie. If I had been in Mr. Loring's place, I might not have felt myself called upon to do any more for What's-his-name — Devitt — either. Mr. Loring had already acted with the best kind of humanity, the practical, energetic kind that gets results; he may have saved the man's life. I daresay Devitt didn't care to be under further obligations to him, for that matter. The old fellow seemed to be pretty tough physically, and was not suffering or in danger any more. Oh, no, I don't see anything especially 'dreadful' about the way Mr. Loring acted. I only hope if I'm ever in trouble, there'll be as efficient a Samaritan around."

"Well, I — I thought at first it was dreadful, but afterwards I began to see it more *your* way," said Nellie, in eager and pathetic relief. "Men seem to be so hard sometimes, but then the women go just to the other extreme — weak and sentimental, you know. I — I *did* want to stay there and look after him, but I see now it wouldn't have done."

"Lord, no!"

Eleanor gave a slight sigh and settled back against the post; in spite of Cook's efforts and of her own self-persuasive arguments, her bearing somehow did not suggest satisfaction; and he was scarcely surprised when she said a little plaintively: "I wish I *could* do something for people, though, Uncle Marshall. I mean I wish I could have some *work* among people like that —"

"*Wow!* Here! Don't go to thinking that Mr. Devitt is one of the class that needs to be *worked*

among!" Cook interrupted in amused alarm. "That would be an awful mistake. In the first place, he's an upright, intelligent, self-respecting man; and secondly, speaking from a base, material standpoint, he's probably able to buy and sell *me* ten times over! I told you he had that son at college. That sort of man is just as much the backbone of the country as—well, as our friend, the Ice-King. You can't patronise people like the Devitts. The next generation will be glad to marry 'em!"

"Oh, I—I didn't know," said the girl, taken aback. "He *looked* like—I haven't had any experience, of course. What I meant, though, was that I'd like to go down town into the real slums and work—Social Service, or something like that. I *know* I could do it, and I'd love to. I wouldn't *patronise* them either, Uncle Marsh, I'd just be *interested* in them. I'm sure that's what they'd like."

"That's the right idea, I believe, Nellie," said Cook, seriously. "Poor people, or the 'lower classes,' as we call them, don't want to be instructed or converted or civilised, I often think. They want what the Roman mob demanded a matter of twenty centuries ago—bread and circuses. Enough to eat and a little amusement, a little happiness, poor wretches!" He smoked thoughtfully for half a minute. "Well, why don't you do that, then, if you want to so much?"

"Aunt Juliet is afraid for me to," said Nellie, in her most carefully expressionless voice. "She's afraid that if I went down town into those places, among the people, I'd bring back some horrible disease—have it myself and give it to everybody in the house. You see how it is, Uncle Marshall."

Indeed, Marshall saw; columns of rhetoric could not have made the explanation clearer.

The next morning came on refreshingly with less heat, less dust, and, being Sunday, less factory-smoke in the air. Contrary-wise, Mr. Cook detected a higher pressure and a certain thickening in his domestic atmosphere, owing, he sardonically conjectured, to Sabbath influences, or his own impending departure by the "Limited" that afternoon. Fannie came down to breakfast, pale and heavy-lidded, but conscientiously cheerful; Eleanor's demeanour reminded him of all the stock metaphors dealing with banked fires, volcanoes temporarily quiescent, calms before the tempest, charged weapons hanging on the trigger; he pictured himself as one who smiled and smiled and was a villain still; but Juliet — Juliet, Cook declared inwardly, was in magnificent vein! She warned Fannie, who scarcely touched a morsel, against the dangers of eating too much, and getting any fleshier; she inquired of Nellie whether Mr. Loring senior could read and write, and expressed surprise at hearing that he possessed those accomplishments, knowing that "self-made men of his class were illiterate as a rule"; she was sympathetically doubtful about the success of Cook's latest work, with abundant assurances that it was really good in her opinion, no matter what the critics and people in general said. Seldom, in short, had Mrs. Maranda given a more finished exhibition of her powers, armoured in innocence and unconsciousness.

"You say you had a bad night?" Cook commented courteously after Mrs. Juliet had, in fact, said so,

with minute detail. "Why, Juliet, it's wonderful how naturally and easily you talk — as if you felt perfectly well! You force yourself to it, of course. It takes a will of iron to do that!" said Marshall with an admiring sigh, avoiding Eleanor's arrowy glance.

"Oh, I wasn't *sick*, just restless and nervously exhausted, you know. I don't call *that* anything," said Mrs. Maranda, somehow faintly uncomfortable. She did not know what it was about her brother-in-law's nice-sounding speeches that sometimes disturbed her; the tidy, insignificant man with his commonplace features, his eyeglasses, his unimportant manner, was certainly not a person to be feared, least of all by one who had known him for years, long before he got to be so clever and famous — as Mrs. Maranda privately put it. Then why —? Cook was ashamed of himself, easily reading the vague, child-like trouble of her face. But now Nellie took a hand with ominous amiability.

"Speaking of Mr. Loring —" said she; "do you know, Uncle Marshall, something has just dawned on me too late, the way things generally dawn! I'm afraid I must have seemed very ill-bred and snobbish to the man Mr. Loring called the *puller*, do you remember? I didn't pay any attention to him."

"Hey?" said Cook, for the moment unsuspecting. He laughed. "Why, I don't know that you needed to pay any attention. It might have embarrassed him a good deal, if you had."

"What is a *puller*?" Mrs. Maranda asked. Fannie began to look anxious.

"It's the man that takes the cakes of ice out of the box they're frozen in," Nellie explained, and addressed her uncle again, earnestly. "Of course *you*

didn't know, but I thought he looked weirdly familiar somehow, and I was going to speak to him only the excitement about Mr. Devitt put everything else out of my head." And here she turned to Mrs. Maranda and spoke penitently. "I'm so sorry, Aunt Juliet, I don't know what your family will think. It was one of the Morehead boys, Tom, I think. You know I don't see any of them for years at a time, and there are so many anyhow. Your own nephew, and I didn't speak to him! I *am* so sorry!"

After an appalling moment, Mrs. Juliet gathered strength to say freezingly: "You must be mistaken, Eleanor."

"Oh, no. I asked Mr. Loring afterwards as we were coming home, and he said yes, his name was Morehead. The work isn't hard, Aunt Juliet; you mustn't worry about that," said Miss Maranda, kindly. "Mr. Loring said *anybody* could do it — it doesn't take any training or even intelligence, he said. The machine does it all, practically. But I *wish* I had spoken to him. You'd like to have him come and see you, wouldn't you?"

"I — I don't know Homer's children at all — I —" began poor Mrs. Maranda in helpless irritation.

"This young fellow didn't look more than eighteen or so — nothing but a boy," said Cook, with for his part the best of intentions. "I suppose he took whatever job he could get, rather than be idle."

"Very likely, and it does him credit!" Nellie assented cordially. "Particularly as he *may* not be able to read and write, you know. I do wish I had spoken to him! However, he may not have recognised me. And you tipped him anyhow, Uncle Marshall; I saw you giving him something when Mr. Lo-

ring's back was turned, so I daresay he doesn't resent *my* behaviour —"

"Nellie, I will not submit to this! I — I — I will *not* —!" Mrs. Juliet stuttered out, rustling up from her chair furiously. "I — you — it's a deliberate insult, it — I —"

"Why, what's the matter, Aunt Juliet? Don't you like to hear about your family?"

"They are *not* my family — they are my brother's family, they — I —"

"Let's go out and look at the garden, Fannie; you take me out and show me the garden," said Cook, seizing his other niece's arm and propelling her off the scene in sheer panic. And once safely outside among the roses: "*Woof!*" he ejaculated, and went through a pantomime of wiping his forehead.

Fannie returned his grimace with a dismayed little smile. "Nell *will* do it, you know," she said resignedly. "It always makes Aunt Juliet perfectly *hoping*. And Nellie enjoys that, of course."

"You don't, I imagine."

"No," said Fannie, shrugging patiently. "I'd rather go along quietly without any fusses. But Nellie can't help herself and Aunt Juliet can't either, I suppose, so there you are!"

Cook picked up a long-handled digging-fork, and began to prod about the roots of the plants. "There *you* are, Fan," he said presently. "The innocent bystander always gets the worst of it."

"Oh, no, Uncle Marshall, you're mistaken; *I* don't ever have any trouble," said Fannie with urgent earnestness. "Nellie never says a word to *me*; and you know how lovely and kind Aunt Juliet always is to me. She and Nellie just can't get along, that's all.

The trouble is, Aunt Juliet, without meaning to, is all the time rubbing Nellie the wrong way, somehow. And it's not exactly *temper* with Nell, either, as so many people think; it's — it's — I believe it's *spirit*. She can't *stand* being rubbed the wrong way?" Fannie halted on a questioning inflection, and her uncle nodded, absently pecking at the ground. "Nellie isn't a bit *mean*," said the sister. Cook nodded again. "She seems sometimes to get an idea into her head that I'm being *put upon*, somehow. But you know, Uncle Marshall, that's nonsensical. Aunt Juliet is just as good and generous to both of us as can be. She's done everything for us for years. I don't see how we can *ever* return it, *ever*!"

Cook heard the note of fanaticism in her voice with the mixture of impatience and respect that fanaticism inspires. Bray her in a mortar, and the girl would not abandon principles or practice! He sympathised with Eleanor's view of the waste and futility of the process, but on Fannie's side there was a kind of unreasonable justice, too. And when she said in a moment that she was a little afraid the sun might bring back her headache, and moved to go into the house, Marshall made no effort to detain her, although he guessed that her real motive was not anything so trifling as the care of her own health. No, Fannie was going to fan Aunt Juliet, to support Aunt Juliet with smelling-salts, and iced drinks, and alcohol rubbings, and words of comfort! Same old thing!

CHAPTER IX

COOK continued his aimless pottering around the flower-beds, wondering in humorous resignation which one of the women would come to him next. He looked at his watch and calculated that in not more than five hours the thrice-blessed "Limited" would be bearing him away "East," back to work, to bachelorhood, to another week-end in another garden, at the recollection of which it may be he coloured a little and felt foolish and promptly addressed a biting jibe to his inner self. At about the same time, as he was leaning on his tool, idly staring about the neat suburban yard, there came within view two gentlemen approaching along the street, with inquiring glances to this side and that as of strangers in the neighbourhood. They caught sight of him, and after a moment's inspection and some interchange of words, crossed, heading definitely in his direction. Simultaneously, Cook recognised one of them to be the younger Devitt. He was not limping to-day; the author noted the fact inquisitively. On the contrary, he came on with a vigorous step which suited equally well his undeniably striking personality. Nothing sickly or Byronic about him now; very likely, indeed, those attributes had resided in the academic gown and mortar-board in which Cook had first seen him, garments which have a way of conferring distinction. But even young Devitt's present informal dress which was nothing more picturesque than the light "sack-suit" and straw hat of the season, to be

seen by the dozens anywhere — even that acquired character by his carriage; more than ever Cook was convinced that this was not an ordinary young man.

He went to meet them; and having got up close: “Mr. Cook!” said young Chauncey in his fine voice, and took off his hat with the air of a prince in disguise, unconsciously royal. Hereupon the little man of letters, who looked like nobody in this high presence, shook hands with Mr. Devitt and with Mr. Devitt’s companion. “Know my friend, Mr. Dalton!” said Chauncey sonorously. Cook obediently exchanged salutations with the mental reservation that he would rather not know Mr. Dalton any too intimately, although the latter was a well-fed, well-dressed, prosperous-looking person, something in the style of Loring senior, but with much more open and engaging manners. Why this unreasoning prejudice? Mr. Cook himself might not have been able to explain it. “I’ve met confidence-men in my time,” he once remarked obscurely, referring to this occasion.

Devitt introduced Cook himself as “Mr. Cook, the celebrated author”; and Dalton on his side was most hearty. “Pleased to meet you, sir!” he said, and looked the other over with a pair of pale blue, very rapidly moving eyes. There occurred that slight pause, familiar enough to the “celebrated author,” in which people obviously awaited some trenchant bit of fun or wisdom from him; or, failing that, a majestic inquiry as to the object of this visit. In fact, he was wondering mightily on this last point, but kept it to himself, inviting them to seats in the shade with a joking word or two of apology.

“A little dirt on one’s hands is a matter of no consequence in our town, I know, but if I seem to have

more than my share, it's because I've been grubbing around the garden as you see."

"Regular farmer, hey?" said Mr. Dalton pleasantly. "They say this here fellow that writes the funny things has a farm up in Indiana. I pretty near laughed my head off over that play of his — can't remember his name, but you know who I mean. *Everybody* knows *him*."

Young Devitt looked disproportionately grave and interested. "Do you *like* outside work?" he demanded.

"Why not?"

"I thought you wouldn't want to do anything but write," said Chauncey with a simplicity that somehow startled Cook, it seemed so out of keeping with the young man's mature and forceful bearing. He was used to all sorts of personal questions and comments; but it was not often that they struck him with such a sense of incongruity.

"Oh, well," he said lightly; "you know the professions of letters and agriculture aren't so very different. At least they have one quality in common; both require an unconquerably sanguine temperament. Eh?"

Dalton said "Ump?" with a look uncomprehending and interested but wary, as of one who suspected he might be witnessing some species of conversational thimble-rig game. Devitt listened with unsmiling intentness.

"That is very true," he said impressively, his deep eyes fastened on Cook's face. "'The professions of letters and agriculture are alike in requiring an unconquerably sanguine temperament.' That is very true, Mr. Cook."

"Is your father feeling better this morning?" asked the author, hastily. "I hope so."

Dalton spoke while young Chauncey was apparently yet gathering himself for a reply. In spite of his unstable glance, the older man—in years he might almost have been his companion's father—was ready and direct of speech and kind enough of heart as now appeared.

"Why, Mike's a lot better—almost as good as ever!" he said warmly. "And say, Mr. Cook, that's one reason Timmie here and I come out to see you. The old man wanted to thank you and that lady, your daughter or whoever it was—Mrs. Maranda, ain't she? We found the name in the telephone-book—he wanted to thank you both so bad that we had all the trouble in the world to keep him from getting up and coming himself. Not that he's in bed, you know. Lord, you couldn't keep him in *bed*! But the doc said he had to stay in the house, and Mike did kick on that. He felt so good he didn't see why he couldn't go along just the same as ordinary; and he wanted to see that lady. He said his own daughter couldn't have been kinder to him. So when he found what between Mrs. Devitt and Doc McKenna, and the boy here and I—they got *me* down to his house, talking to him like a Dutch uncle!—that he couldn't get to go, why, nothing would do him but we must come out and tell you and her all about it anyhow."

Mr. Dalton would have been surprised if he could have known the kind of impression his plain recital made. Cook was thoroughly pleased, touched, vindicated. The nice old Irishman! The fine, decent, right-feeling old fellow!

"Mr. Devitt makes too much of what we did—

certainly of what *I* did," he said. "And as for my niece, I'm sure nothing could give her more satisfaction than to be of some use—to help a little, you know. Tell Mr. Devitt that if he is bent on thanking us, the way he can do it best is by staying at home and getting well. We'd have been distressed if he had taxed himself to come out here and—" At this point Mr. Cook, perceiving that neither one of the visitors was attending, and that both were staring straight past at somebody or something else, turned his own head in time to see his niece Eleanor coming down the steps. She stopped at sight of them, and looked inquiringly but without hesitating; all of Eleanor's movements exhibited a kind of prompt and gracious decision.

Dalton jogged Cook's elbow. "Is that her now?" he wanted to know, in a heavy undertone.

"That is my niece. Yes."

"Golly!" said Dalton hoarsely, gazing with all his eyes.

Young Devitt, for his part, gazed too, but dumbly. Meeting the girl, he was more solemn and Dalton perhaps a thought more jovial than was natural to either man, though they could not have been said to be ill at ease. Eleanor herself heard their errand with much the same feeling as Cook.

"Is he better? Is he really all right again?" she asked, her face flushing and brightening as she looked from one to the other. "Why, of *course* he couldn't come out here—it would have been dreadful! And I didn't do a *thing* anyhow." She turned to the son. "You're going to make him take more care of himself after this, aren't you? Did he ever have anything like this before?"

"Why, I — er — I don't know," said Chauncey. The frank surprise of her expression seemed to embarrass him. To Cook's eye he had the look of squirming under it, helplessly. But Dalton intervened readily — even glibly! — with an explanation.

"Tim ain't been home much these last three or four years," he said. "He's been off at college, and of course Mrs. Devitt, same as all the rest of these mothers, she don't let him know if there's any trouble at home, if she can help it. You know how that is, miss. I believe Mike's had kind of dizzy spells once or twice, but I guess it ain't anything so serious as it looks — just nerves going back on him a little now and then. Mike's getting on towards sixty years old, and he can't do what he used to, that's about the size of it. He ought to lay off and let somebody else attend to the work and the worry. That's what I tell him. I can talk to him pretty plain; he's known me all my life ever since we was both a lot younger, and he'll take it from me. Trouble is, Mike thinks there ain't anybody can look after his business but him. He won't let go."

"It will be different now that *you* are at home, though," Eleanor said to Tim — or Chauncey — who received the intimation with an uncertain smile.

"Sure! Tim'll take right hold!" said Dalton with prodigious warmth, and slapped his companion on the shoulder approvingly. "Sure he will, ma'am! I don't know, though," he added waggishly; "Tim may get these dizzy spells himself, especially if any young lady like you happens to be around!"

Cook and Eleanor each executed a polite laugh; and the young man, after an instant, followed them

tentatively. "I—I believe I know somebody you know," he was now emboldened to say to her. "They're named Morehead—they live across the street from us."

"Oh, yes, I know about the Moreheads."

"As soon as she heard the name, my mother said she thought you must be one of those Marandas they talk about sometimes —"

"You don't mean '*Junk*' Morehead?" inquired Dalton. "At least that ain't his real name but he goes by it mostly in the Thirteenth Ward. You don't mean you know *him*?" And upon being answered that this was the case, his countenance, as he eyed Eleanor, expressed his real feeling with a freedom which, Cook privately opined, was seldom allowed it. Unspeakable astonishment looked from Mr. Dalton's every feature. "I guess you don't go there very often, all the same!" he hazarded at last.

Sunday dinner was eaten in the middle of the day actually; figuratively, the hour resembled midnight, such was the gloom emanating from Mrs. Maranda's apartment. Cook and Eleanor sat at table in profane cheerfulness; but Fannie and the servant stole about on tiptoe with lowered voices, and the former neglected her own meal to speed upstairs and down with Mrs. Maranda's tray, from the room where the invalid sat with her outraged feelings in a rebuking seclusion. She had not gone to bed, Fannie informed the others, returning from one of her flights in quest of another hot roll and a little more of the lamb and peas—Aunt Juliet had not gone to bed, but she said she wasn't equal to coming down; she couldn't take a step.

"How about *you*, Fan?" said her uncle. "Seems to me you're taking a good many."

"Oh, *I'm* all right!" said Fannie, pallid, kind, indomitable.

A little later Cook himself went up to bid his sister-in-law good-bye. There was the familiar obscurity and strong aroma of smelling-salts; and Mrs. Maranda, from her pillowed chair, gave him a limp hand, and murmured, "Marshall!" with tragic feebleness.

"It's dreadful for your visit to end this way. *I hoped* that this time anyhow —! But Eleanor *will* do it, you know. I know how men hate scenes like that this morning — I would hate them myself, even if they didn't break me down so. A man's home ought to be lovely and peaceful. I'm sure *I* would always do everything to make it so here for you. I often tell Eleanor that — but *nothing* does any good. And I was feeling so bright and well and happy this morning! I can't understand her, Marshall; I don't think she is wilfully cruel — I always tell her I forgive her the things she says, because I cannot believe she is wholly responsible at such times —"

"Er — yes. That's very noble of you, Juliet — shows so much discernment, too! Er — what did Eleanor say, though?"

"Oh, Marshall, I can't repeat it; I can't tell you — I hardly know myself, only that it was *terrible*! I'm all shocked and unstrung — it's so bad for me — my neurasthenia, you know —"

"Are you in pain? Hadn't we better send for the doct —?"

"No, *no!*" Mrs. Maranda interrupted crisply, starting up. "I don't *want* the doctor. I can bear it, and Fannie knows exactly what to do for me — of

course she's not as good as a trained nurse, but she does very well. I *won't* have the doctor." She sank back. "Don't be anxious about me, Marshall," she adjured him with wan earnestness; "I'm not *sick*."

"No. As long as you are able to eat a little, it's a good sign," said her brother-in-law in a reassured voice, glancing at the emptied tray. "I'll try not to be anxious. Only you see I don't quite know what's been the matter —"

"Oh, goodness, Marshall, it's this *terrible* shock; I *told* you that before!" Mrs. Juliet said, not without sharpness. "Nellie shocked me *terribly*, talking the way she did!"

"Um — yes. But what did she *say*?"

He felt penitently as if he had been something of a brute, when poor Mrs. Juliet broke into hysterical incoherencies; also he wondered if he might not be making matters worse, and what would happen among the women after he had gone? It did not seem as if things could possibly keep on this way; yet, after all, how many, many times had this happened!

"I c-can't *tell* you—you *know* how Nellie can talk!" the other sniffed stormily. "You can hardly ever lay a finger on *what* Nellie says. She lashed me with a *w-whip*. I *told* her that. I s-said to her, 'Eleanor, you're lashing me with a *w-whip*!' Wouldn't you have thought *that* would have stopped her if she had *any* heart? But she only laughed and said that was true, she had m-made a m-mistake; she ought to have taken a s-slipper!" Mrs. Maranda sobbed out fiercely.

Cook coughed. "I'll — er-h-hem! I'll speak to Nellie — *h-hem-hem*!" he said, rising.

"It won't do any good, Marshall — Nellie doesn't

love me! I don't know why she never has loved me!" The last thing he heard as he went downstairs was Mrs. Maranda calling Fannie to rub her hands and arms with alcohol—"it may soothe me a little."

Eleanor came to him with almost the same words as the older lady. "It's all horrid, Uncle Marsh. It's horrid to have it happen while you're here. Otherwise I don't care!" she declared frankly.

"I wish you'd try to get along with her, Nell. It takes self-control, but you *could* do it."

"Like Fannie, you mean?"

"No, I don't mean like Fannie," said Cook. "I entirely agree with you that Fannie's idea is a perfectly senseless self-abnegation, and that it's exasperating to witness. But do you think you make it any easier for Fannie by this sort of thing?"

"She would *be* the same, and *do* the same anyhow. I can't make it any different for Fannie one way or the other," retorted the girl, with truth, as Cook knew. Nellie spoke calmly; she was not given to tears and hysterics. Her manner towards him was without feminine appeal; she was like a boy in her spirit of angry fairness, her sense of equality. "Let's be plain, Uncle Marshall. You talk to me about self-control and consideration for Fannie, and all the while you know that the only person in the house who has no self-control and no consideration for anybody else is Aunt Juliet. Why don't you talk to *her*? Because it's hopeless. Because she couldn't understand. She'd only cry and think you were mean, or in a bad temper or something. It's ridiculous that the rest of us, just because we *can* understand and have some kind of an intelligence and some kind of a conscience, should have to give in to that

poor, dull, vain, selfish, feeble creature, who wants to be told all the time how fine and sweet and lovely and wonderful she is —”

“Well! *I* tell her! That’s what *I* do!” Cook interjected.

Eleanor eyed him, refusing to answer his grin. “Yes, you do. But do you always think that’s nice?” she asked acutely. “Those smooth speeches that the poor thing swallows down whole, while you are laughing in your sleeve at her — do you think that’s nice?”

“Why, no, Nellie,” her uncle admitted. “It’s not in the least nice. I rather think it’s something no gentleman should do. But if she doesn’t *know*, she’s no worse off. And I can’t get through without *some* recreation!” he finished, rubbing one hand up the back of his head, plaintively comic.

“Well, *I* can’t do it, Uncle Marshall — I get too angry. And besides, the fun wears off,” said Nellie, still seriously. “She gets to be too tiresome with her cheap, ostentatious, slip-shod sentimentalism, her pitiful, unconscious hypocrisy. All that childish bawling and sulking is just because of the Moreheads. She’s ashamed of them. It’s contemptible —!”

“Oh, come now, Eleanor!” said Cook chuckling irrepressibly. “Anybody would be ashamed of the Moreheads. ‘*Junk*’” he quoted, wagging his head. “You can’t blame her for wanting to keep Junk in the background.”

“I’m not blaming her for being ashamed of them,” the girl said. “*I’d* be ashamed of them, too, but I’d be honest about it. I wouldn’t make a parade of how good I was to them, and take other people’s praise for it, and fool myself with a lot of saintly talk. I think

that's shoddy. I'd say flat out that I couldn't stand 'em, and I wouldn't tell anybody about what I did for them. Why, you would too, you *know* you would!" she added rather ambiguously.

"Maybe I would," said Cook, also ambiguously. He began to assemble his travelling gear, while she looked on sombrely.

"You've *escaped*, Uncle Marshall," she said, after a moment. "A man can always escape. It's harder for a woman. Look at *me*! If I could get away for only a little while every day, I could stand it the rest of the time. But I can't even do that! I'm not allowed to work. I'm not supposed to do anything but sit at home and be a young lady, and sing Aunt Juliet's praises by the hour. Oh, I know I'm not so terribly badly off; plenty of girls would envy me. I don't want to make mountains out of molehills. But what am I to *do*?"

The little man straightened up from the valise he was locking, all the jocularly gone out of his face; and it was with gravity and feeling that he did what he was seldom known to do uninvited — that is, he made a short speech, containing a certain amount of advice.

"Whatever you do, Eleanor," he said, "don't do it in too much haste. Young people don't know how long life is. I often think there would be a deal less suffering and trouble in the world, if we could all be brought to realise the eternal quality of our acts. The thing we do, we do not once, for to-day, for this one time, but forever and forever, and we've got to lie down and get up with it the rest of our lives. Even going slow, even using our best judgment, things don't always turn out right. But the dilemma

is that we can't drift along. We've *got* to make decisions. We've each got a rudder, and we must steer ourselves with it the best way we can. That's what I tried to tell those college-boys the other day. I don't know how clear I was about it, or whether I'm making myself clear to you now. You said just now that it was harder for a woman than for a man. I doubt that. I think there comes to everybody, men and women alike, a time when they feel they've got to — to take the boat in charge — to lay a course and stick to it, you know. And there're always so many courses! So I'll say to you by way of keeping up this highly original metaphor," he rounded off, more lightly; "don't go off on the wrong tack! And don't get in a hurry, and pile on too much sail! Here endeth the lesson! Shake foot, eh? That's right!"

CHAPTER X

NOT long before the day in the earliest 'nineties when Mr. Marshall Cook, to use his own figure of speech, adjusted his rudder to another course, packed up his manuscripts and cleared for New York — not more than a year or so before that event, Miss Eliza Grace was presented to the society of her native city, at a formal entertainment, given by her grandmother on the young lady's nineteenth birthday. It was the handsomest party of that season; everybody went; there were wagon-loads of flowers, barrels of champagne-punch, incalculable yards of new frocks. The *débutante's* grandmother wore all her well-known diamonds; the *débutante* herself was dressed with priceless Parisian simplicity; and, possessing a doll-like regularity of feature set off by a doll's pink-and-white-ness of complexion, and a full crop of flaxen hair in corresponding style, made, it is to be hoped, a most pleasing impression. Except for the ordinary greetings, to perform which does not require a high degree of intelligence and may be drilled into almost anybody, Miss Grace was not observed to open her mouth the whole evening, not even to laugh; though it was reported upon the best authority that she cried herself to sleep in her beautiful blue and rose and ivory-white Watteau bed-room, after it was all over.

She was the only grandchild — the only remaining descendant, in fact! — of the late Andrew J. Grace

of the Gracetown Tool Works, a pioneer in that industry at which he amassed a great fortune. Bessie got it all; even the widowed grandmother's share, itself of splendid proportions, was practically hers already. The girl did not want it; she did not want any of the money; she wanted her grandfather of whom she had always been very fond. She refused desperately up to the end to believe that he could be taken from her, and when the blow fell at last, sat under it in a tortured dumbness that alarmed those nearest her, and caused others to remark on the stolidity of her disposition. Bessie was fifteen when this happened; afterwards Mrs. Grace took her to Europe, and for four or five years they lived liberally here and there, saw the old world at ease, and liked it better than their own, "*in some ways*," as citizens of this Republic have the habit of saying. Mrs. Grace herself voiced their opinions in a speech frequently quoted in her circle after she brought her little blonde heiress home again, upon the latter's coming of age. "Oh, yes, it's all very finished, very charming, very nice *in some ways*, but I prefer a country where the average unmarried man is rather *afraid* of a rich girl!"

Gossip intimated that Mrs. Grace got what she preferred in full measure. Whether the money, with its inevitable suggestion of extravagance and self-indulgence, frightened away the average independent-spirited bachelor of their acquaintance, or whether something in the girl herself discouraged them, money or no money, was not clearly understood, but as a matter of fact, Miss Eliza Grace was not a success in society — judged by the standard of popularity with the other sex, that is. Nobody ever paid her signifi-

cant "attention." She was shy, or dull, or sullen or taciturn, it was not certain which, but there was no explaining her quiet ways, her few words, her rare laughter except on one or other of these hypotheses. The young fellows did not know what to make of her; she never tried to entertain them, and as for starting a flirtation, one would as soon have expected it from the bisque shepherdess on the mantelpiece, which she resembled. On the other hand they got on well enough with her grandmother, who, at sixty, offered a shining example of the woman of the world with the best that that implies of mannerliness and sprightliness and amiable sophistication. Mrs. Grace had been pretty, too, in the same style as Bessie, small, and neatly turned, but with the opposite colouring. "My hair was black — quite shiny black," she told one gentleman who was commenting on the likeness. "I looked like a china doll while Bessie looks like a wax one — eh? Never mind!" she added coolly, as he began some embarrassed protestations. "Why not a *doll*? To be sure, it's a drawback. People at first naturally conclude that you haven't any sense. Later they find out that you have, and there is nothing more agreeable than an agreeable disappointment — eh?"

So all the young men went to the house and made duty calls, and sent duty bouquets, and danced duty dances that first season, and there was the proper exchange of entertainments back and forth, and gossip generously allowed that Mrs. Grace had done everything in the world for her granddaughter, and if the girl couldn't get anywhere socially with all that backing, it was manifestly her own fault, and the case was hopeless. Well, then, Bessie didn't get anywhere; perhaps she did not care about it; perhaps her

appearance of indifference was pure bluff; no one could say. Her second winter "out" must have seemed as flat and uneventful from a young woman's standpoint as if she had been fifty years old and permanently laid on the shelf. As time went on, and from a "bud" she gradually grew to be classed among the "old girls"—both of which graphic terms are borrowed from the *Society Jottings* column in the *Sunday Observer*—Miss Grace withdrew more and more from the public eye. At that, she did not take to art, or to kindergarten work, or Social Service, or the Woman's Club, or to any of the approved channels for an "old girl's" activities; her tastes were as queer and unnatural in those as in other directions. She travelled a good deal; she collected old china; she had a wonderful garden at the North Hill place, and another down on Long Island where they had a country house; and bye and bye she and her grandmother, to the puzzled surprise of their society, seemed to have made, by hook or crook, an extended acquaintance amongst people of note such as musicians, actors, playwrights and the like, and would forever be entertaining some celebrity at one or other home. "That's one of the things that money sometimes brings to people," was Mrs. Juliet Maranda's explanation. "Geniuses are human; they're just as fond of creature comforts as the rest of us, and will go where they can get them. I ought to know something about geniuses; I've lived in the house with one!"

This brings us back deviously to Mr. Cook, the young author—he *was* young in those days, somewhere about twenty-nine or thirty—whose *Times* and *Tides* came out the same year with Bessie Grace,

but contrariwise made a gratifying sensation. Marshall went to the Grace party; he went to all the parties that winter in the first high hat and white waist-coat and made-to-order evening-clothes he had ever owned in his life, a circumstance which, together with the other circumstance that he was mistaken two or three times for the caterer's head-waiter, occasioned him much sardonic amusement. He knew all the men, but very few women, setting aside the conscientious hostesses who sent him cards, because of his family, and because they were "inviting everybody anyhow, you know." It was not until a much later date that they began to be interested in him more personally. For that matter, to ladies in their position a young man is nothing more nor less than a pair of legs that can dance; and as Marshall was conspicuously unable to do that, he could not be considered an asset. He used to roam about unobtrusively watching and listening and sometimes indeed looking rather wistfully at the pretty girls, to whom he could easily have got an introduction, if he could have persuaded himself that they would care to know him. He liked women and believed that, given the chance, he understood them; but not these bright, fluttering creatures. So he continued to roam, and in the course of it, one evening came upon Miss Grace, sitting by herself, apparently forgotten by everybody as usual, and as usual apparently careless of that fact. She recognised him with an unsmiling little nod; and upon that Cook was inspired by sheer curiosity to go and sit down by her.

Miss Grace looked at him with her expressionless blue eyes, and said in a clear, rather high voice, also

of doll-ish suggestion: "What made you so surprised when I knew you?"

Marshall was more than surprised at this piece of discernment; he was thunder-struck; coming from her, of all people in the world, the effect was almost uncanny. "I almost always *am* surprised when anybody remembers me," he said honestly. "I look so much like everybody else — like ten thousand other men, at any rate."

The girl examined his face seriously, but did not make the obvious rejoinder, the rejoinder nine girls out of ten would have made; she said nothing, and it came into Cook's head, characteristically enough, to speak to her with absolute straightforwardness, and, as he put it inwardly, "see what would happen"!

"Do you like parties?" he asked.

"Like this? No," said Miss Grace. "That's not because I'm intellectual or anything of that sort. I don't like them because I don't like them, that's all. Like not liking chocolate nougat, you know."

"I see. Some other kind of amusement, maybe —? The opera, or —?"

"Yes. Only people are always wanting to take me to *Aïda* and I don't want to go to *Aïda*. I want to see *Human Hearts* and *Lottie, the Poor Sales-lady*. I think—" she stopped suddenly, and Marshall read a certain anxiety in the immobile face she turned toward him; but under his humorous, comprehending eyes, something new came to life there. Like others, perhaps she felt the reassuring and sympathising touch of his interest, that, because it was genuine, never failed of its effect.

"*The Queen of the Opium Ring* is a very good

one, too," he said as they both began to smile. "Tell me something else you'd like."

"You don't mind, Mr. Cook? I do feel impelled to, somehow," said Bessie, naïvely. "Well, then, I'd like to go to the beer-gardens on the hill-tops and drink beer and eat green onions and bread and cheese. I'd like to go on the river in a shanty-boat, and to the Police Station, and to Latonia to the races. I'd like to go behind the scenes on the stage, and I'd just as lief see a fight, and I'd like to talk to Salvation Army people, and I wish I could know a cabman, or an all-night lunch-stand man, or some boot-blacks and horse-jockeys and policemen —"

"Wait a minute!" Cook interrupted her. "Do you want to go around to all those places by yourself? Is that it?"

"Yes, I suppose so," said Miss Grace, taking thought; "at least, I don't mean going in a party, you know. *Anybody* can do that. People *often* do that. That's just slumming — it's stereotyped. Yes, I suppose I want to go by myself. Of course, if I were a man, I would. *You* do. That's how you find out so much."

"Oh, yes, but it's not so much fun as you think going around by oneself, Miss Grace," said the young fellow, betraying his loneliness for once — and to this flaxen-haired, insipid-looking little thing! He pulled up, stunned by what he had discovered both in himself and her.

Bessie nodded briskly. "It's not an adventure to you. It's all in the day's work. Well, I believe I envy that, too. Now tell me about yourself. What would *you* like to do best?"

"I think I'd like to take you around to some of the

places you've been talking about — not to the lurid ones — Police Court, you know — I'm afraid that wouldn't do. I don't know whether it would *do* at all for me to take you anyhow," said Cook, in some confusion. "But that's what I'd like."

The pretty pink and white mask turned towards him again, lifeless as at first. "Oh!" said Miss Grace. All at once a bright, impenetrable coolness enveloped her; she was like some fairy-tale heroine touched by unkind magic to an icicle, to a diamond, before his eyes. "You are very kind. Thank you!" she said, rising. And Cook bowed himself away in a hurry before she could complete the dismissal by turning her back on him, which was what her manner led one to expect!

He walked off not so much hurt as perplexed, wondering if she received or rather repelled other men's impulsive friendliness in the same fashion. "Probably not. Probably the individual counts!" said Marshall to himself, in his sharp but lenient way. "Heaven knows I'm nothing much to look at, and of no importance otherwise to a young lady! Maybe I was a little fresh with my offers, too. She scarcely knows me, and —" and here he halted, a new guess dyeing his face crimson. "Oh,—!" said Mr. Cook, in dreadful profanity, jamming his hat down upon his brows with a fierce movement. "*That's* what she thinks, does she? *Me!* I'll *show* her!" He made savage resolutions never to go near Miss Eliza Grace again.

In the meantime, going home in their carriage, Mrs. Grace was saying to her granddaughter: "Who was the man I saw you talking to just after supper?"

"That was a Mr. Cook."

"Cook? Oh, yes, I remember him now — one of that old Cook family. Yes, that's who he is," said the older lady, after consideration. "Nice people. He's connected someway with Mrs. Frank Maranda, too; she's a very lovely woman, they say. He writes, doesn't he? Somebody told me he wrote. Is he nice?"

"Oh, quite too nice," said Miss Grace, in a tone which her elder must have recognised unfavourably, for she uttered an impatient ejaculation.

"'Quite too nice,'" she echoed. "I suppose the poor harmless young fellow asked you if he might call, eh?" And, as the girl made an assenting sound, Mrs. Andrew Grace's own small ordinarily impassive features twitched; she spoke in a sort of affectionate vexation. "Bessie, I've told you over and over again that American men are safe. We don't have fortune-hunters *here*. Of course I'm only your grandmother, and you know a great deal more than I do, nevertheless I happen to be quite sure of what I'm talking about in this instance. You must stop thinking those things. To begin with, they're really sordid, and — and small-minded. You don't want to be *that*, I hope. You must stop it."

"Very well, grandma, I'll try," said Bessie, without interest. "He did seem rather nice at first. Then I thought he was getting like the rest of them. He wanted — he said —" she shrugged amongst her furs and velvets, and was silent.

Mrs. Grace was far too astute — china-doll exterior and all! — to inquire further as to what he had wanted or said. She was sorry for the young man, sorry for her granddaughter, in whom she felt something more serious than the familiar exaggerated

cynicism and melancholy of nineteen. "I begin to wish I had never taken you abroad, Bessie," she said presently. "I thought it would be a fine thing — travel — art — languages — all that. But over there it's so different; a girl gets the wrong point of view. It's a mistake for Americans — *some* Americans anyhow — to start their young people in that society. Of course there are adventurers and harpies everywhere, but — I can't understand why you don't see the difference in our men!" she exclaimed almost testily. "You're clever enough, and you've had enough experience."

Possibly this last was true, and Miss Grace may have had enough experience in one direction to have instructed even a dull girl; but if there were any needy members of the English or continental nobility and gentry in her background, any flashy Romeos and Captain Rooks, she never revealed them. She went her way; and now discovered with what feelings who can say that it led her into Mr. Cook's at every turn. Neither of them had noticed it before; but it seemed as if they were forever running into each other. They knew the same people, they were asked on the same occasions, more than once they were paired at dinners and theatre parties — in short, as the gentleman vowed to himself, it looked as if the very devil was in it! He could not have avoided her if he had wanted to, and in a little while Marshall began dismally to suspect that he did not want to! Besides, after a time, Bessie herself ceased to evade him; she became altogether frank, friendly, delightful. She never bored him about his writing; she had identical tastes; she even laughed with his own relish over the same sort of jokes; sink her money — and poor Mar-

shall would have given worlds to sink it to the bottom of the sea — and there could not have been found a couple better matched.

Mr. Cook's character and code of morals, if not quite flawless, were of a fibre to keep him from letting slip the slightest hint of all this to Miss Grace, or to anybody. He knew their world, and had not practised telling it stories for nothing. The young lady, whatever she felt, was not less sophisticated. Though she took Marshall's violets and whimsical verses, and had him out to dinner, and went with him to a score of places, yes, even to the beer-gardens and melodramas of that first interview — though they were, undoubtedly, seen very often together, there was never any talk about them. They liked each other so openly that it discouraged rumour; not to mention the fact that Bessie Grace, for all her money, and Marshall Cook, for all his talent, were both profoundly uninteresting persons to society at large. Next year Cook went away; he went to New York, and his city knew him no more; Miss Grace embarked on those eccentric courses which have already been outlined; and we may presume the romance — so to call it — died a natural death, since fifteen years after, though still single, they were still the best of friends.

The Grace house on Long Island was a most beautiful and correct piece of colonial architecture, designed by one of the leading men of the day. Prominent authorities commented on the pure antique "feeling" of its roof-line and chimneys, on the absolute propriety of its setting, walks, arbours, groves, terraces and so forth, which likewise had been laid out by a landscape artist of renown, on the frugal

and unconscious elegance of its furnishings breathing the forefathers' own spirit, for which Miss Grace herself was mainly responsible. She used to quote some of the opinions with unappreciative laughter, out of a bound volume of foolscap wherein she wrote them down — "Half-Minutes with Great Talkers" was lettered in gilt on the cover. "Grace before meat!" Cook said whenever she sat down to the enjoyment of this collection of banalities.

"Take care, you're in here, too!" retorted Bessie. "*Cooked* meat, eh?" For some reason she never would let him have more than a glimpse at a page here and there, in spite of their intimacy. During the part of the year that they spent at "Eversofar," Cook came and went much more often than he or they realised; the house was frequented by so many of kindred professions, people that sang, people that painted, people that played every instrument in the orchestra, floating or stranded members of upper-class Bohemia. "I seem to be meeting you here all the time!" Walter Stevens the illustrator said to Cook one day.

"I was just about to say that to you!" grinned the little man. "'Tis but a tent where takes (as often as he can) his rest,' a writer to the publishers addressed —!"

Miss Grace and her grandmother started off rather suddenly to Europe the summer that Cook went out to the commencement exercises at Cambridge College. They were gone by the time he got back to New York, so Marshall missed his week-end in the country, and set himself to work in a lonesome and unwarrantably resentful mood. However, Bessie got and answered his letters; she urged him to "drop every-

thing and run over for a breathing-spell." They expected to be in Switzerland in August. Couldn't he? He had to write briefly that he was too busy.

"It's this play, you know," Bessie said, reading out occasional passages to Mrs. Grace, as they sat on the balcony outside their hotel windows.

"I thought the censor, or the morality-man, or whoever he is, had forbidden it," said the other lady, yawning.

"It's not the same one. That was *One Night in Venice*. I don't suppose he'll get *that* put on.¹ This is *Days Like These* — altogether different."

"Much better choice of a title, anyway. Days seem somehow more dependable than nights," Mrs. Grace drawled.

It was October when they landed at the West Street docks; and they got their baggage through, and went up town with the maids and trunks and cabs and settled themselves at the hotel, without sight or word of Mr. Cook, although that gentleman could ordinarily be counted on to meet them and make himself useful. It was one of the few ways in which he could get even with them for their endless and most gracious hospitality, Marshall told himself. There were no flowers, no bon-bons, no notes, no telephone messages. He must be very busy indeed. The play had opened; *Days Like These* stared from all the hoardings, and at night winked electrically above the sidewalk of Broadway; on sending around for seats they found the house sold two weeks ahead. "I hope

¹ She was mistaken. Not only has it since been put on, but as all the world knows, it has had a prodigious run everywhere, and as a moral rectifier is classed with *Damaged Goods* and other pieces every young person, boy or girl, in the country should see.

he'll have a few more days like these!" said Bessie epigrammatically; "he must be making something out of it at this rate!" Whatever she thought of his silence and defection, she gave no sign; indeed, being at thirty-five as inanimate of feature, and almost as smooth and pink and white and flaxen as ever, it was still difficult to associate her with such a process as thinking under any circumstances.

Next evening at dinner, Mr. Cook turned up, without warning, in morning-dress — he who was so fastidious about his appearance! — and looking so worn and worried that both ladies exclaimed with concern. "I couldn't get here — couldn't take time to write even — couldn't do anything — but I knew you would understand," he said. And then, seeing that they did not in the least understand, exclaimed in his turn: "Why, didn't you *know*? You *knew*, didn't you? You saw it all in the papers? Good Heavens, I thought of *course* you would know!"

They had not noticed the papers. Marshall made a gesture of weary amusement.

"You must be the only people in New York, in the United States, in the whole universe that don't know, I think!" said he. "Every man, woman and child that I have ever met, and some that I haven't, has had something to say to me about it!" He spoke to Bessie. "You remember my writing to you last summer about my niece? About this love-affair she was having? Well —!" He made another gesture. "She's gone and done it!"

"*What!*" cried out the other two in concert.

"Yes. She's married him. They are married. You know how I felt about it." He paused. "I have no business bothering you with all this. My private

affairs — that is, if anybody were allowed to have any private affairs nowadays —!”

“*You* can’t, at least. Not in your position, I suppose,” said Miss Grace. “But it doesn’t bother us at all — we *do* understand, now that we know — only you must tell us some more. I don’t see why the papers — when did it happen?”

“Tuesday — Wednesday — don’t ask me! I got the telegram — it was the letter kind, you know — two or three nights ago at dinner. A bolt out of a clear sky — I hadn’t any idea, though I daresay I should have had — I ought to have been ready for it. Actually I don’t know whether they had just had it done — whether it was just over — the wedding, you know —”

“Yes. Mercy, don’t speak of it as if it had been an operation for appendicitis!”

Cook laughed. “I’m flustered still,” he said, beginning to recover his natural manner. “But it’s nothing — not a patch — not a circumstance to what I was when this telegram arrived saying they were coming on —”

Mrs. and Miss Grace ejaculated again. “*What? Coming on? They’re here?*”

He shook his head. “Not now. They left this afternoon. But they *were* here for three days. That accounts for me, doesn’t it?” Cook cast a ruefully comic glance down over himself. “It never occurred to me that you might not have seen the papers. Of course the home ones were full of it — ‘Elopement in Smart Set! Amzi Loring Two, Amateur Baseball Champion and All Around Athlete — Miss Eleanor Maranda, Most Beautiful Girl in Society, Niece of the Distinguished Novelist and Playwright —’!

That's where *I* get on, as my nephew Amzi would say. The minute the papers here found out about the relationship — you can imagine!"

"Was it an elopement?"

"You may call it that. They went across the river to a 'squire in Covington and he 'tied the knot,' as the reporters have been saying. Eleanor's an Episcopalian, too! They didn't want a regulation wedding, it seems. At least, *he* didn't, and that was enough for Eleanor. She may have had reasons of her own besides — didn't want any family fuss, very likely," Cook said, thinking of his sister-in-law. "She knew what *I* thought. I remember preaching her an idiotic sermon about not doing anything rash and all that; of course she knew what I had in mind. Still she might have known I wouldn't have interfered. They're both of age anyhow, so why the 'squire and why Kentucky? They could have gotten themselves quietly married at home by a clergyman. However, it's done now and can't be undone!" He spread one hand in a movement expressive of defeat and finality. "I really have no business to come here and bother you with this," he said again apologetically.

"Don't be absurd and *considerate!*" Bessie adjured him with great freedom. "Besides I'm a perfect puddle of vulgar curiosity. I'm a living interrogation-mark. I wouldn't be human and a woman, otherwise. What did old Mr. Loring say?"

"Nothing so far. For that matter there isn't anything *to* say. He couldn't make any reasonable objection to Eleanor any more than I could think up anything reasonable against his son. That's one of the things that make it all tragically silly. I wrote

to him; as the only man in Eleanor's family, I thought I ought to do that, though I hadn't the least notion what to say. The letter was all vague references to 'youth must be served' and so on. No doubt he'll write me back a plain man's letter, temperate and sensible, that will put my cheap devices to shame — 'Marshall Cook, Esquire: Dear Sir; Yours of the seventh inst. rec'd and contents duly noted —' " He began to laugh again, interrupting himself as before deprecatingly. "Do forgive me! I can't seem to stop talking about it. There hasn't been time yet to hear from him. I haven't had time for anything myself."

Mrs. Grace surveyed him. "Marshall Cook," she said with solemnity; "am I to be disappointed in you after all these years? Do you mean to tell me that you've been dogging the young people around for two or three days when all they wanted in the world was to be left alone? And you pretend to know all about it — to write love-stories — reprehensible ones at that! What have you been thinking of—?"

"*Think?*" cried out Cook; "I haven't had a thought in my head for three days! How does one think? What is the process? I've forgotten how. No, don't laugh either, all this hasn't been so very funny!" he went on, his own smile giving place to an expression almost melancholy. "It's not funny," he reiterated. "I've been with them all the time, but not of my own desire, you may take my word for it. It was Eleanor. She wanted me. Perhaps I seemed to her to supply some element of conventionality — regularity — social sanction — I don't know what. After the 'squire, you know, and all this nightmare of publicity. Perhaps to her mind I rescued the sit-

uation from being 'common'—poor Eleanor!" he sighed unaffectedly. "She stopped me from giving her a wedding-present—that is, she wouldn't take anything—wouldn't let me get her anything. But we passed a bird-fancier's place one day, where they had all kinds of pet animals for sale, and she took a fancy to an Angora kitten that was in the window, so I insisted on going in and buying it for her. She actually cried a little—I don't know why! It's a honeymoon! Do you know she hadn't any wedding-ring, even? The State doesn't require one, it seems. Amzi bought one for her after they got here. It doesn't seem the same thing to me, and I'm sure it doesn't to her, but she pretends to be satisfied, anyhow. He made fun of it himself, but he did get it for her; he's in love with her after his fashion. We've been going around incessantly looking at automobiles all morning, and to the ball-game every afternoon. There's a World's Series being played, or about to be played that he's deeply interested in. At night we went to 'musical shows'—that's the proper term, you know—" Cook shook his head. "It's a honeymoon!"

PART TWO

THE WAGON AND THE STAR

CHAPTER I

NOWADAYS, those of us who frequent lecture-courses are likely to hear at any time from the official in charge of the entertainment that the name of T. Chauncey Devitt needs no introduction to the American public; in spite of which fact, the gentleman invariably is introduced with some outlay of flourishing phrases. And, after several stirring rounds of applause, he begins in his usual impressive style his address entitled, "The Worth of an Ideal," or perhaps that other one: "The Making of a Soul"; or, again, it may be: "The Price of a Man," "The Value of an Opportunity," "The Passing of an Illusion," etc. Some of the lectures — which have had a vast success — have been brought out lately in book form by the author with a preface in which he states that they are the fruit of five years' exhaustive study of governmental questions, political economy, sociology, ethics and religion. It has been ignorantly or perhaps maliciously suggested that to master any single one of these subjects would require the whole five years, if not more, of any ordinary mortal's time and labour; but that only goes to prove that Mr. Devitt is not ordinary. He is, indeed, *hors concours* as regards both capacity and achievement; for besides giving a half-decade of his short life — he cannot be much over thirty at this writing — to the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge, as just de-

scribed, he has always taken an active interest in all the large issues of the day. Initiative, Referendum, and Recall, the Single Tax, Prohibition, Equal Suffrage, Organised Labor — he has lent his eloquence and his profound store of information to the support of all of them. Nothing can exceed the warmth, the scope and catholicity of his convictions; as the daily press has remarked, “Devitt is right there with the noise every time!” — a piece of that vulgar and simple levity which all our great men must learn to endure.

T. Chauncey endures it, for his part, unruffled; he gives the impression that it is surprisingly easy to be a great man; and moreover he was firmly resolved on being one from the beginning, from the first moment that his mind could grasp the idea of a future at all. Yes, twenty-odd years ago, when he was little Tim Devitt — nobody dreamed of calling him Chauncey in those days — a boy playing around the railroad-tracks and elevators and lumber-yards of the East End, diving off the coal-barges and learning to swim and manœuvre a john-boat among the muddy currents of the Ohio, running errands to the corner grocery for his mother, and fetching a can of beer from the saloon now and then for his father, going to school and plaguing the life out of the motormen and train-hands by risking his own in sudden hair-raising excursions onto the tracks in front of their trolley-cars and locomotives — all the while young Tim was conducting himself thus, to outward seeming no whit different from the commonplace lads his companions, he was secretly absorbed in contemplation of his coming greatness. He fixed no date for it; he never consciously worked towards it; yet the boy was

as confident of future eminence as of sunrise on the morrow. How or for what he would become celebrated was a mere detail; the vision, at once hazy and brilliant, revealed nothing clearly or definitely but himself, supreme, dramatic, in the centre of the stage, the focus of applause. Possibly the scholastic distinction which entered into his expectations whenever he chanced to think of it like every other sort of distinction, was the one he cared least about, though he was fond of reading, had a facile memory, and was by way of being a prize pupil in all his classes. If anything, what he looked forward to specifically was leadership among men, notwithstanding the fact that he never arrived at any kind of leadership among boys. Indeed, so far from being the chieftain of a "gang," he never even belonged to one; secret conclaves, dens and rendezvous, signs and pass-words — from all these familiar fooleries he was somehow excluded. Whatever gift, whether that of inspiring fear or admiration or simply a devoted unreasoning adherence, qualifies a boy to lead, or to take part in councils, his fellows must have decided that Tim lacked it. Perhaps he was not well enough liked or well enough disliked; perhaps he was not considered at all, one way or the other. At any rate, obscurity and unimportance were his portion, like that of many another prophet amongst his own people. The comrades of Mr. Devitt's youth should regret their unappreciative blindness now; yet, to the mind of one observer at least, there is something formidably shrewd, cold and trustworthy about the collective judgment of boys. What becomes of it as they grow into men, is another of the mysteries of human development.

If Tim was aware of his detachment, it only served

to confirm his dreams. He read about Cæsar, Napoleon, Lord Byron, George Washington, and sundry other historical personages, not to mention scores of heroes of romantic fiction, and perceiving that one and all had dwelt — more or less — in splendid isolation, marked from the cradle for the loneliness of glory, unhesitatingly set himself in their company. Although, putting success aside, they seldom had much in common, and were men of widely differing characters and careers, Tim could discern a striking resemblance between himself and every one of them! It was extraordinary. Perhaps he heightened it by a diligent imitation of each succeeding one, as he conceived that hero to have been in appearance and manner as fast as he made their acquaintance through the public library, of which he was the steadiest patron known. Master Timothy's literary tastes, and his impressive rendition of his various rôles filled his parents with a happy wonder and admiration and expectation. They themselves had no idea of being anybody but Michael Devitt and Norah Devitt his wife, she that was Norah McCarthy, plain decent people, and their own performances in the reading line never got beyond the daily newspaper and the *Catholic Messenger*.

"Sure, the boy reads a book off in the turn of your hand; it's no more to him than eating down a dish of stir-about, he's that quick. He gets through the biggest ones they have in two days. I don't know is it safe for him, he's so young and all," his mother would say, her pride flimsily disguised as anxiety. "It seems like it's not in nature for anybody to be so bright at his age — fourteen his last birthday. But we can't hold him — his father nor I, we can't hold

him. And when all's said, the learning comes as easy as easy to him. 'Tis not as if Tim had to work hard. That's what all his teachers do be telling me whiles I get to worrying. 'Leave the boy alone, Mrs. Devitt,' they says. 'There's no saying how far he'll go, and that kind has to be let go their own ways. You'd ought to be proud of your son, 'stead of fussing over him,' they says. 'Well,' I says, 'I ain't proud. For what should *I* be boasting?' 'Twas the Lord above done it, not me. Praise be!' " And here, very likely, the mother would cross herself with tears in her eyes, while the shawl-headed neighbour to whom she had confided all this as they met over the sink in the tenement-house hallway would nod and cluck, and call on the heavenly powers in her turn with words of congratulation and sympathy. "God be good to us, it's God's truth ye're telling, Mrs. Devitt. The boy's a fine boy entirely. We'll be hearing of him one of these days, mark my words!"

There was a time in his life, during his college years, and at about the date when the "Chauncey" was introduced into his name, when young Tim found it convenient to forget these tenement-house days, and was not over-enthusiastic about presenting the elder Devitts in the society to which he himself aspired. He has gotten all over this diffidence now; he acknowledges without any false shame that he is a self-made man, sprung from the people—the common people. Nothing so exalted as a tenement-house sheltered his birth and boyhood; it was a shanty! And he will talk willingly and copiously about his early trials, struggles, privations, about the paternal dinner-pail, the maternal washboard, his own bare feet and frequently empty stomach. He no longer

shuns the mention of Michael and Norah; on the contrary he brings in their names as often as may be, with a break in his magnificent voice. "Father! Mother! Are there words in our language—in any language—more beautiful than those?" he says. I myself have heard him say it, though whether in a lecture on governmental questions, or on political economy, or sociology, or religion or ethics, for the soul of me, I can't remember. It is very touching, though; and you respect him for the regret he unaffectedly expresses that his own father and mother, after having done what they could for him, which you gather was pathetically little, have passed beyond the reach of his grateful affection. He had hoped some day to repay them, to give them a secure and comfortable old age—"But," he says with solemn resignation; "that was not to be!"

It has been intimated, however, that Mike Devitt, besides being astounded beyond measure, would not have been best pleased had any such reports as the above concerning himself and his family and his circumstances been circulated during his lifetime. Michael came out from the old country about the year eighteen-seventy-seven; and to be sure he was nothing but a green young Irishman without much in the way of either money or education, but tolerably well equipped, on the other hand, with pluck, ambition and common-sense. At first he swung a pick in the ditches, and bellowed curses at his team of mules, and said "sir" to the boss, and doubtless did live in a shanty, or in any kind of a bunk-house with the rest of his gang of day-labourers. But that was all over by the time he fetched Norah McCarthy out from Sligo, and they were married and set up housekeep-

ing in the two rooms over the bakery at the corner of Pearl and Miami Streets. Shanty, forsooth! It may not have been a palace, but it was anything but a shanty, whatever their son's recollection of it. Norah kept it as neat as a new pin; with only one child to look after, she had abundant leisure as their neighbours pointed out, and moreover Mike was the best of men about the house. He never raised a hand to her, or came home drunk in his life. They lived well, and put by a penny, too. Yes, Michael Devitt would have made it painfully lively for anybody who suggested then or at any other time that his wife had ever had to wash any shirts but her own man's, or that his son ever went barefoot and hungry. And as to providing for his old age, I believe he did that himself, on a modest scale; T. Chauncey is said to draw something of an income still from his father's estate, enough to keep him at ease. That was the main end and object of all the old people's work and thrift and prayers. "We'll make our Timmie a gentleman, or know the reason why!" Norah used to say; and one hopes that the honest couple are taking their long rest, satisfied.

The first fifteen years of Tim's life witnessed several changes of residence, each registering a step upward in the Devitt style of living, along with their increasing prosperity; but it was not until he was in his second year at high school, and there began to be talk of Cambridge College, that Tim's mother all at once found the East End a highly undesirable locality in which to make a home and bring up a family. It was noisy, it was dirty, it was dangerous with so many railroads and roughs, it was too near the river — "And that's a true word, anyhow! The

river's a bad neighbour, the kind that's forever running in!" Mike agreed with a laugh. So they shook the dust of Pearl Street and its environs from their feet, and went and took a house — a *house* this time, mind you! No more tenements for Mrs. Michael Devitt! — at the opposite end of the city, on Poplar, near the foot of the Incline, in a much more refined neighbourhood where there were a good many boarding and rooming establishments populated by medical students, dressmakers, department-store clerks and so on, and a saloon only about every two blocks. The house was a two-story brick with a bath-room and side-yard; and what with that and her parlour all newly furnished in golden oak and lace curtains, and a lady to come in and help with the cleaning once a week, and Mike making money hand over fist at the road-contracting, and young Tim carrying off prize after prize at school, and herself having a dress or hat for the asking — what with all this, her old East End friends reported that Norah Devitt got that stuck up, she never came to see them any more, or had so much as a word you'd throw at a dog whenever they met! But Mike now — nobody had anything to say against *him*! He was always easy as an old shoe and never forgot any one, in spite of his good luck, and his rise in life.

"Luck, is it? Well, ye may *call* it that, but I *spell* it w-o-r-k!" he sometimes responded good-naturedly and sensibly. "Of course, I've got a pull. Oh, yes, it's a grand pull I've got with two friends of mine that I can always count on. One of 'em's Mister Right Hand, and the other's Mister Left!"

"It's not so much them two, as it is Mister Head on your shoulders, Micky," one of his friends

retorted. "That's where you've got the bulge. There's plenty of men come out here the same time as you did, and started the same way, and look at 'em! Look at 'em! They're just where they were, and they'll never get any further. Why, I'll bet you've got some of 'em working for you this minute."

"Sure I have that!" said Michael, rather ruefully. "Not so many — one or two — but 'tis enough! The boys ain't so handy with themselves as they was once, but I can't turn 'em down. They're getting old. There's Corcoran now — ye mind him? Denny Corcoran, he's full as old as I am. They fired him off the Waterworks tunnel job the other day, and here he comes to me with the sorrowful tale, and for old sake's sake I had to give him something to do. I could name ye a dozen like him. Of course 'tis the drink that's the matter with Denny, poor fellow. But they ain't all that way. I don't know just what it is ails 'em; they can't seem to get ahead any. I mean young ones and old ones and all; there's something wrong with 'em. They've got just as good a chance as ever I had; but they can't seem to take hold somehow. And then they talk about my luck!"

"No, they haven't got as good a chance as yourself, Mike," said the other. "They're not made the way you are. The way things are nowadays, a man's got to get down and scratch gravel — he's got to hustle, or somebody'll walk right over him. Yep, *you* know how that is, I guess. No need to tell *you*. Well, now, *you* can do it, and *I* can do it; but these others can't do it, that's all. The poor devils can't do it. All the same, they got to live, ain't they? A man's got a right to his job, ain't he? That's what the unions takes care of, like I was telling you. That's

what the unions is *for*. A workingman's got to work; he hasn't got any time to look out for himself that way, so his union takes hold and sees that he gets a square deal; keeps people from sticking more onto him than he can do, and then telling him he's incompetent and throwing him out. It's not fair to measure the ordinary man up against one of these experts, and then say: 'Here, you ain't doing as well as this other fellow. Git!' That ain't fair. The only fair thing is to standardise the work, so there won't be any unjust comparison. But who's going to do that? Not the employers, you bet! They're going to squeeze the last ounce of work they can out of a man, and throw him away when they're through with him. That's where the union steps in and keeps 'em from taking the bread out of his mouth, and out of his wife and children's mouth. Ain't that right? Ain't it right the workingmen should get together and fix up some kind of organisation to protect 'em against organised capital?"

"Sure, it's right. Why, I'm just as strong for the union as you are, Jack," said Devitt hastily. "I'll give the boys the raise. I know they have a hard time getting along — some of 'em do, that is. I don't have it so easy always myself. I've been a workingman too — am still by times, for that matter — only there wasn't any union when I began, and what I say is that I got along without it, just the same. It's as I was saying, some of us do and some don't, unions or no unions."

"Things were different twenty years ago. You couldn't do it now, Mike. You couldn't make out to live hardly nowadays on the wages you got then. Things have gone up so, it ain't but fair that wages

should go up to meet 'em. It's no more than reasonable. You know there ain't any set of men that could get me to come to you with any proposition that wasn't reasonable. That's what I told 'em, I said: 'There's reason in everything, and I won't stand for anything out of reason, nor Mike Devitt won't neither, not if I know him!' I says: 'You can talk about calling a strike on him, and getting him all tied up if you want to, it won't make a bit of difference to Devitt, unless he sees there's *reason* in it.' I gave 'em a good talking to. Nothing in it for *me*. I just like to see things done in a square way." He made a liberal gesture: "Can't help it — that's the way I feel. I wouldn't put this up to you, if I didn't think it was fair, Mike."

"I know, I know. I told ye I'd give 'em the raise," said Mike, hastily again, in fact with a warmth of agreement that may have cost him some effort. "And now we're over with business, ye'll stay and have some supper, or Norah'll be in our hair, the both of us!" he added much more spontaneously, as the other grasped his hand.

This guest was Mr. John Dalton, a familiar figure in the Thirteenth Ward, where he had been councilman for a period of years, conscientiously giving his whole time and attention to the duties of that office, it may be presumed, since he was not observed ever to be engaged in any other business, trade or profession. Now, however, he was out of politics, having become Secretary of the Federation of Teamsters and Allied Trades, with an office in the Kremlin Building, instead of the little room on Liver Alley behind Metzner's Place where he used to carry on the work of being a councilman; and, judging from

appearances, he was making a success at this job, too, without undue exertion. Off-hand, one would not have guessed that he and the elder Devitt would be particularly congenial; he was some years younger than Michael, and having been born on this side, must have grown up with very different standards and points of view — not to mention environment and opportunities and advantages. But the families came from the same little neighbourhood in the old country. Devitts and Daltons knew one another from old times, by-gone generations of them had intermarried, their association was a habit, a tradition. Councilman and Secretary Dalton had always been as intimate in the Devitt household as any friend they had; and his heavy-set figure — growing somewhat heavier of late years — his diamond scarf-pin, his small, bold, light blue eyes, his stiff black moustache and big jaw, his thick laughter, his ready, fluent talk, were among young Tim's first recollections. Tim thought Dalton a great man; he wore good clothes not only on Sundays but every day, he smoked cigars instead of a little rank pipe, he could drink any amount, he had plenty of money, he went about making speeches, it had been printed in the newspapers and Tim had seen it with his own eyes that Jack Dalton owned Congressman Candee; what more in the way of a hero could one ask?

It was disappointing and provoking at the same time that it impressed Timothy even more with a sense of the other's greatness to find out that he could not successfully ape this potent and splendid personage; besides the clothes, the cigars and the money, he uncertainly perceived something else in Dalton's equipment, some enviable and formidable quality which he

himself did not possess — as yet! Whatever it was, Tim was sure that he would possess it some day; but in the meanwhile, even he, who perhaps was not gifted with much humorous insight, realised that openly to take Dalton for a pattern might be regarded as merely funny. The conclusion was enforced by the total lack of serious consideration which his ventures at Dalton's swagger and half-jocular, half-bullying assurance met with in the home circle.

"Ho, ye want a dollar, do ye?" his father would say, suddenly lowering the paper, and grimacing at him with a sharpness of eye that, to tell the truth, caused the embryo Dalton to shiver in his shoes. "My fine Timmie wants a dollar! And who told ye to come at me like a pirate demanding it? Is that a way to behave? Mamma, why don't ye bring this boy up better?"

"Now, then, Mike, give it to him. He asked ye for it civil enough, ye know he did. Ye just want to tease the poor child. Never mind, Tim dearie, your father will have his fun. He'll give it ye directly," cried the mother, bristling. "Now then, Mick—!"

"Ye're spoiling him, that's what ye are, Norah. He'd ought to be earning his own dollars in place of coming to me for them," Devitt pretended to grumble, getting out the money, nevertheless. "He's sixteen years old. When I was sixteen, if I'd gone to the old man, it's not a dollar I'd have got, but a whack over the head! By the same token, I didn't do it!"

"Of course ye didn't, ye great, strapping fellow with a fist on ye like a ham," said Mrs. Devitt, indignantly. "Ye never will understand that Timmie's delicate. The boy hasn't the stren'th to work *your* way. It takes all he's got for the studying. Would

ye rather Tim was out on your roads digging your ditches along with them dagos and niggers than getting himself a good education to — to be — to be a credit to your old age? Think shame to yourself, Mike Devitt — ! ”

“ Mother of Christ, will ye listen to the woman! Norah, I never said a word like that! I just said — ”

And at this point Master Tim generally escaped, with his dollar, to be sure, but conscious of conspicuous failure in the rôle of Dalton. As far as getting the money was concerned, his mother’s methods were much more effective; but I am afraid that, while finding her extremely convenient and reliable, the young gentleman did not thank her for her excited partisanship; I am afraid that, in spite of the noble sentiments he expresses nowadays, Timothy felt, at this time, a very definite contempt for his mother. And amongst his many models, I doubt if it ever occurred to him to class Michael Devitt; but did ever any boy yet make a hero of his own father?

It may speak something for young Devitt’s character that the desire and determination to achieve his destined greatness after the style of John Dalton really governed him, notwithstanding an occasional boyish shifting of allegiance, from this time forward. All the while he was at college, engaged with branches of education of which Mr. Dalton had never heard, or in recreations of a description to rouse the latter’s unbridled scorn and laughter — all the while T. Chauncey was grinding away, getting everything by heart with astounding accuracy, garnering in more prizes, regarded by his mother with adoring pride, by his teachers with a dubious wonder, by his fellow-scholars scarcely at all one way or another — all this

while Chauncey was cherishing his plans of rising to power, affluence, distinction *à la manière* Dalton! He never confided his ambitions to anybody, partly because he never made any close friends, and partly from a profound caution, or rather secretiveness which he early developed, which, indeed, the circumstances required of him. When asked what he meant to do or be, it was manifestly impossible to explain that his career was to be shaped upon John Dalton's. No one would have understood; Chauncey himself did not clearly understand, for that matter. He had no bent for research, analysis, investigation, original work, in short, of any kind. However, he speedily got an answer ready; he was not to be caught like so many of the young fellows who would unblushingly confess that they had not yet decided upon their future. When, for instance, Professor Wilson inquired, Chauncey tranquilly replied that he intended to be a consulting engineer.

"A — er — a stationary one?" said Wilson, looking extraordinarily interested.

"Yes. Yes, of course," said Tim, who recollected having seen the term stationary applied to engineers somewhere, somehow, in one of his books.

"Of course. A consulting engineer would naturally have to be stationary," said the Professor, in a mild and thoughtful way, quite devoid of significance. It should not have made T. Chauncey for the moment faintly uncomfortable; but he never liked Wilson, or felt at ease in his presence.

CHAPTER II

THE first people with whom the Devitts made acquaintance on moving to Poplar Street were Mr. and Mrs. Homer Morehead and their large family. This was natural, as they lived just across the way, and the two households must have met soon; but in point of fact, it was the very next day, when Norah with her head wrapped in a towel was flying to and fro everywhere upstairs, downstairs, indoors and out, scouring, sweeping, ordering and arranging, and Mike was good-humouredly swearing at the stove-pipe, and Tim was staying home from school to run errands and help with the step-ladders and buckets of water—it was while they were in the middle of this that Mrs. Morehead, reversing the usual proceeding when new-comers appear in a neighbourhood, sent over to borrow a dishpan! “And the next time I set eyes on it,” Mrs. Devitt related afterwards, grimly amused, “’twas standing on the wash-bench by the hydrant in their backyard, and whether there was potato-peelings or somebody’s dirty shirt in it, I couldn’t tell ye, but it looked like both! ‘Oh, my, if there ain’t your pan!’ says Mrs. Morehead, seeing me stare. ‘Ain’t the girls careless now?’ she says, laughing like. ‘I’ll see it’s sent back right away.’ ‘Oh, don’t mind about it, Mrs. Morehead,’ says I. ‘I’m not needing it. I’ve plenty of pans. Never mind it!’ So, sure enough, she didn’t! She’s got it this minute, and I’m just as

well-pleased. The way it looked, there ain't a pig but what would have turned up his nose at the notion of taking his swill out of it. It wasn't long till we found out what kind they were. I've never loaned 'em since, though not for the want of asking! Them Moreheads are all of 'em a poor, footless lot. They do be calling the father 'Junk,' ye know, and 'tis a good name for him; junk's all he's fit for. There's times I feel sorry for the childer, for it's not their fault; what could ye expect? Like father, like son!"

Now behold how inconsistent are the judgments of man! Homer Morehead, whom thrifty, reputable, successful people like the Devitts and others dismissed with a contemptuous nickname, actually resembled in certain not inconspicuous aspects the universally respected — it may even be, feared! — John Dalton. Homer had once held office too; he had been head of the Garbage Department, from which position an unappreciative administration deposed him after about two years, since when he had been allowed to remain, against his own earnest protest, "out of politics." Also like Dalton he was reputed to hold any amount of liquor; and he was another lily of the field, nobody ever having known him to toil, much less spin, even when he had a job. But it was Mr. Morehead's misfortune to lack what the other so eminently possessed, the outward accessories of greatness. In direct contrast to Dalton, Junk loafed in his own home, or hung about the street corners, forever "striking" somebody for a dollar or a drink, seedy, unshaved, unwashed, and out of pocket. He was fathoms deep in debt to every tradesman in the neighbourhood; his conversation was an endless funereal narrative of hard luck and unjust treatment. It would not have

been Homer upon whom young Tim Devitt would have striven to model himself — perish the thought! Tim would have ridiculed the suggestion that the mighty Dalton and this ineffectual creature had anything in common, or might be at bottom two of a trade. He was, however, observant enough to note and imitate — within limits — Dalton's manner toward the other man, whom the ex-councilman apparently felt free to use or abuse at will. He would treat Junk to a glass of beer as he might throw a bone to a hungry mongrel; and likewise whistled him to heel, or kicked him out of the way figuratively — perhaps at times literally — whenever it suited his mood or convenience. The spectacle helped to confirm Tim's belief in his hero, and strengthened his resolution to be himself some day an owner of congressmen and Moreheads.

Meantime he was on pretty intimate terms with the neighbours across the street, rather to his mother's uneasiness. It was true the Morehead boys were not of an age to associate with her son — in other words to contaminate him; Tom was too old, twenty or so, occasionally had work somewhere, and at any rate was seldom home by day or night; the other boys were too young, four or five years Tim's junior, quite beneath the notice of a freshman at Cambridge College. It was the young women of the family that Mrs. Devitt looked upon with disfavour, against whom she was eternally aiming those pathetically futile shafts of ridicule, criticism, sarcasm with which mothers seek to protect their sons from sentimental entanglements. Mrs. Michael was a good woman; she would not breathe a word against the girls' characters, though Heaven knew it was strange how they man-

aged to keep straight, coming out of such a home! After all, they were young, there was a chance for them yet; some day they might leave off lazying round the house, reading novels with the beds not made and the dishes standing, or dressing themselves up with false hair and high heels and paint and powder and parading the streets making eyes at the men, and going to shows at the theatre, and to the Zoo and the Lagoon with whatever fellow asked them — they *might* leave off all that some day — but Mrs. Noah's manner indicated that it was much to be doubted — and stay at home and learn to cook and redd up the house and make their clothes or at least mend them decently. If some such change did not take place, you had only to look at their mother, the fat, slovenly thing in her greasy old skirts with the placket-hole always hanging out — you need only look at *her* to see what the girls were coming to! Sorry indeed would the man be that married 'em, Tim's mother averred with a sort of scornful sympathy which had the same effect on the person for whom it was intended as the whole of the foregoing speech — that is to say, no effect whatever! Master Tim would hear this kind of talk day by day, meal by meal; and would rise up immediately thereafter and go over and sit on the front steps with Lutie Morehead all evening!

Mrs. Devitt, like other ladies in similar circumstances, was not entirely fair; there was something to be said on the side of the sirens. The Morehead girls all worked; they were working when Tim Devitt first started off to Cambridge, long before he had begun to think of making a living. Ella had the gift of a course at business-college from some rich relative — it was reported — and got a place as stenographer in

a down-town office; Louise (Lutie) was with a ladies' tailor on Seventh Street, Carrie at the ribbon counter in the Bon Marché. They had no time and perhaps, when they came home at night, not much energy left for cultivating the domestic arts; and might be pardoned for taking their ease or their pleasure on Sundays and holidays, even in the style Mrs. Devitt righteously condemned. As to a knowledge of the world and of the value of money, any one of them probably had a good deal the advantage of her Timmie, for all his sex and his intellect, his striking appearance and no less striking manners which his years at Cambridge brought to a finished perfection.

Lutie Morehead was the one who had come, of yore, to borrow the dish-pan. And from that day, though she was then only a gawky girl-lout of fifteen with her frowsy yellow hair tied up in a bit of shoestring and a dirty gingham slip burst out at the armholes and not nearly long enough or full enough to cover her growing young body respectably — from that day she had cherished a devouring admiration for Tim Devitt; it would not be going too far to call it a passion. Whoever loved that loved not at first sight? Tim was so dark, slender and elegant looking; he had such beautiful eyes; he spoke differently, he wore his clothes differently, he carried himself differently from other boys. He was the living image of a certain Guy Maltravers, the villain — and therefore the most fascinating character — in *Hearts and Hands*, the current melodrama in the *Fireside Magazine*; Lutie used to call him Gu (thus she pronounced it) in her thoughts, until he took to calling himself Chauncey, an innovation which she was the earliest to adopt.

By that time, that is, during his senior year, Lutie

had "bloomed into womanhood" as the *Fireside Magazine* would have said, as T. Chauncey himself might have said, for that matter; it is a handy and high-sounding phrase, besides being in this case more than usually descriptive. For Lutie had not stopped at blooming; she was already alarmingly full-blown, "taking after" Mrs. Morehead in a tendency to flesh, and being a healthy young woman with a fine appetite. There are gentlemen, like Mr. John Dalton, for instance, who admire an opulent figure, but poor Lutie knew instinctively that T. Chauncey would not. She herself thought that it was not "refined," wept and worried in secret, starved by fits and starts, hoarded her money to buy various expensive "reducing" girdles, corsets and what-nots, and spent hours of torture belted, laced and strapped into them — all without the loss of an inch or an ounce! It was exasperating. Otherwise, however, she was a pretty girl. She would have received attentions in plenty from the male youth of Poplar Street and its vicinity if she had given anybody the slightest encouragement. But these unlucky lads had no distinction; they were not picturesque; they were not spectacular; they did not go to Cambridge and carry off all the honours at the same time that they were wild and dashing and dangerous like the heroes of Mr. Chambers' novels. They clerked in groceries and drug-stores, or drove delivery-wagons; so far from resembling Gu Maltravers, they not infrequently had distressing crops of pimples, and they wore ready-made ties and bought "two-pant suits" for thirteen-fifty at the Bon Marché. Lutie would have none of their society; she cared only for T. Chauncey's, and alas, T. Chauncey knew it!

For young Mr. Devitt was not at all in love with Lutie Morehead; his mother might have spared her worry on that score. What kept him sitting on the Morehead steps or the Morehead parlour sofa side by side with her whispering in the semi-dark until an indiscreetly late hour was no warmth of feeling on his own side; it was wholly on Lutie's. He was not in the least averse to her being in love with him, and showing it; her adoring devotion enfolded him luxuriously, caressing his every sense. It was as profound and unquestioning as his mother's, only spiced with something else, something ardent and electrifying that the young man recognised with a species of shamed delight. Here was a situation for a Don Juan; but Chauncey did not really want to be a Don Juan; he merely wanted to be thought one. He knew that being a Don Juan nowadays is likely to turn out a costly recreation what with the Mann law, and breach-of-promise proceedings in the courts, and considered himself a great deal too clever to "get into trouble *that way*"; but, apart from that, Lutie did not stimulate him to the adventure. He liked to feel her thrill when he held her hand or kissed her; he liked to see her change colour and tremble under his gaze; he even liked it when she would jump up and move away from him in a panic, chokingly murmuring that he could just shut his face and not say any more things like that; he needn't think he could get flip with *her*, and so on; Chauncey relished all this too much to forego it, but all the same, Lutie was safe. It was too easy, too obvious! What man ever vehemently desired what he could have for the asking? If she had only been a married woman, now —! But even then, he told himself, she would have missed

the flavour, the piquancy of the affair; she had not the slightest instinct for intrigue. He would not have been ill-pleased if she had shown a disposition to pine away in a wan and hectic decline with unsatisfied longing. The operation would have been a pretty lengthy one in view of Lutie's health and avoirdupois, and somehow the suggestion moves unpoetic souls to profane hilarity; but Chauncey was serious; he was always deeply serious about himself.

And so was Lutie; perhaps the gratifying seriousness with which she took him was, when all was said, her strongest attraction. That part of their conversation which was not philandering was given exclusively to T. Chauncey, his plans, his endeavours, his successes — he never had any failures — his past, present and future. Lutie heard all about Cambridge, Chauncey's classmates whom he was always excelling, his professors whom he was always confuting, the fraternities that competed for the honour of his membership, the dramatic, literary and debating societies of which he was the leading light, the girls whom he had met and, of course, conquered; he referred to these last with a chivalrous reluctance — a name, a sigh, a quick and conscious changing of the subject — but in spite of him it aroused suspicion, and rowelled poor Lutie into a miserable activity of question and surmise.

"Is she pretty?" was invariably her first anxiety.

"Yes — beautiful! Please don't talk about her — *please* don't ask me any more about her!"

"Where is she now? Still up there at Cambridge?"

"No. They took her to Europe. Professor Manners sent for me. He said he wanted to talk to me

about his daughter frankly, man to man. I had to tell him that I could not —! It was not my fault that Margaret —! I said to him: ‘Professor, I think my heart is dead — I think it is a stone. I care for nothing but my career. I cannot love.’ He said: ‘Good God, Devitt; won’t you reconsider? Can’t you think it over?’ But I — I *couldn’t* —!” Chauncey broke off, sweeping his thick, wavy, blue-black hair back from his forehead with the noble gesture natural to him. He stared past her at the mantelpiece whereon there stood beneath the crayon portrait of Mrs. Morehead, a cup and saucer of blue glass decorated with gilt traceries, a china representation of a shoe ripped open at one side with a china big toe coming through, a small vase of Oriental ware from the Japanese store, filled with toothpicks, and two metallic-looking figures in seventeenth-century costume, each drawing a sword. Chauncey gazed at these objects with tragic, brooding eyes. “It was horrible!” he said, shuddering. “Don’t speak to me again about it, Lutie!”

“Huh!” said Lutie, and went on, unmoved by this appeal: “Didn’t you see her again after that?”

“Yes, once. Don’t, Lutie — don’t torture me! I want to *forget*! Can’t you understand that there are things a man *must* forget?”

“All right,” said Lutie, meekly and rather prosaically. “I won’t.” It was at such moments that her inadequacy became most annoyingly apparent; she never knew when or how to play up to him.

Sometimes, indeed, she was guilty of downright tactlessness; witness, for example, her display of overweening interest in Amzi Loring Two on coming across his picture in baseball uniform and the article

about him in the afternoon paper that summer before his last year at college when he spent the vacation on tour with a professional team. "Millionaire Busher Cracks Out Home Run," the extra was headlined; and there stood Amzi grinning pugnaciously over his bat from the middle of a column of more or less accurate biography. Lutie studied it with questions and comments that T. Chauncey Devitt — who, as yet, had not been approached for his photograph by any journal — found dull to a degree.

"My, he's big, ain't he? It's funny his going to Cambridge and your knowing him, and here he is in the paper! *Don't* it seem funny to you to know somebody that way, and then have his picture staring right at you in the paper? I guess he must be pretty good; it says here: 'New York is rumoured to have offered ten thousand for the new star, but Steinie says "Nay, nay!"' Who's Steinie, do you suppose?"

"Steinkampf, they mean — the owner or manager of the team, you know. That's just a newspaper story, most likely," Chauncey explained in a bored voice. "It's nothing but a little scrub league anyhow. It's only because his home is here that they make such a fuss over him. And then his father being so prominent in business. Everybody knows who *he* is, and they can't afford to overlook him, you know."

"Well, he knocked the ball like everything anyway! I guess he can play ball all right," said Lutie obtusely. "They wouldn't let him in the ball-club just because his father was a millionaire. Do you believe he is, really?"

"It's not a matter to which I have ever given the slightest attention," said Chauncey majestically.

"Well, *I* would! I should think you'd have got some idea from knowing this one. Tom says they've each one got their own machine. He's working out at their Elmwood works, so of course he knows the old man, and I expect he must know the other, too. I'll ask him. What's he like, anyhow? Ain't his rooms perfectly elegant? Or have you ever been there?"

Chauncey shrugged. "Of course. But we aren't congenial. Why, he isn't *like* anybody particularly; he's not a man anybody would single out. *I'd* never make a friend of him. Mentally Loring is —!" He shook his head, words failing him.

"Goodness, he ain't off in his head, is he?"

"No, no. I don't mean anything like that," said T. Chauncey impatiently. "I mean he hasn't any mentality. He can't do anything but play baseball."

"Uh-huh," said Lutie, returning to the photograph with undiminished interest. "I'd like to see him once, though. I heard he was dead stuck on one of the society girls here, Miss M'randa — Nellie M'randa. She's right in with that North Hill crowd — real *society*, you know. Lots of 'em, Edie Garrard, and Annette Gebhardt and Bessie Grace and all that moneyed crowd —" said Lutie, rattling the names off glibly — "Lots of 'em come to Fritsch for their tailor-mades, and that's how I heard. Nellie M'randa's come, too, but just with somebody while they were trying on; she don't get anything of Fritsch; I guess she hasn't got the price. I heard some of the girls one time when she was there kinda kidding her about some fellow; maybe it was this same fellow. I didn't say anything, or let on, of course, but she's a kinda relation of Pop's — well, not a real relation,

just by marriage, kinda — she don't know me when she sees me, and I kinda don't like to breeze up to her and tell her who I am — it would look, well, kinda *fresh*, you know, and as if I wanted to break in, and it don't make any difference if a girl is poor and got to work, you can show just as much true refinement as if you had a million, *I* think. She's got lots of style and — oh, I don't know — *you* know! I mean you'd know she was *somebody* anywhere you met her, if you met her in the *moon* or *anywhere* — you know what I mean? She's got the *dandiest* form! They say this Loring Two fellow is just crazy about her — and here's his picture in the paper! Ain't it funny what a small place the world is, after all?"

At the moment the world seemed to Mr. Devitt much too small a place to accommodate himself and Amzi Two comfortably. Chauncey disliked the other young man as heartily as it was in his power, not being a person of strongly defined tastes or very deep feelings, to dislike anybody. Even if he could have been brought to acknowledge it, he could not have explained why; who ever can? He would have been pleased to hear young Loring called a big, stupid brute; but it was not exactly because of his stupidity or brutality that Chauncey did not fancy him. Perhaps the trouble was that Amzi, for his part, refused, as it were, to make the enmity mutual — an absurd reason, but a reason nevertheless. The big man would not take the trouble to hate his fellow-scholar; when he noticed Chauncey at all, it was to laugh at him, and there was something in his laugh that made it harder to endure than a kick. His lack of "mentality" was annoyingly exhibited in such diversions as cooing or trilling the name of Chauncey in his great

raucous voice on sight of the other a square off; or by going up behind Chauncey as the latter paced along in dignity, and ramming his hat down to his ears; or again by seizing Chauncey by the collar and waistband and obliging him to "walk Spanish" across the campus in full view of errant townspeople, ribald small boys, classmates, even instructors and, hideous to relate, young ladies of their common acquaintance. There is nothing humorous about this horseplay, except to the simplest and coarsest minds; but for that very reason one cannot found a quarrel upon it. If a man strikes you in the face, it is an insult to be gravely resented; but what are you going to do if he turns you up and spansks you? Self-respect would seem to enjoin reticence and inaction; the less said the better, in short. Mr. Devitt's sole recourse was to distance the other in the class-room; and that was but an apples-of-Sodom sort of revenge, for Amzi cared nothing about his standing as a scholar, nor did any one else. He always "got through," nobody knew how, and nobody inquired. So long as he remained the star half-back, the crack left-fielder, the champion all-around athlete, the Faculty would wink at anything to keep him in Cambridge was Chauncey's bitter and probably most unjust judgment; and Loring himself would rather wear those titles than all the academic laurels in creation.

Next summer both young men graduated. That was one occasion, at least, when Chauncey had absolutely the premier part, and acquitted himself to admiration, as has been seen. It was the highest moment of his life so far; and every one, all his world, seemed to grasp its significance as a manifestation of his character, an earnest of what fate held in store

for him. The other young fellows congratulated him honestly; the president, the professors spoke in grave and kindly approval; the girls applauded and admired; it was a season of almost perfect satisfaction. Almost, because there was the inevitable crumpled rose-leaf to disturb his rest; in this case, the behaviour of his father and mother which caused Chauncey wretched uneasiness in anticipation, and turned out to be even worse than he had feared.

"Here now, *don't!*" he said crossly, twisting out of Mrs. Devitt's joyfully effervescent embrace. "Don't! Can't you see nobody else does? The first thing you know everybody'll be laughing at us. This isn't like any place *you've* ever been before, remember, and people don't act the way *you've* been used to."

"I know — I know — I can't help it, Timmie — I don't want to shame ye before all the grand folks — I won't any more — though, to be sure, they're none of 'em noticing *me* anyways," said his mother, valiantly trying to hold back her tears; she was in a muddle of emotions, pride, hysterical tenderness, sheer excitement, and chagrin at the treatment accorded her by the "grand folks." Was she not the mother of the "champeen," as she innocently ranked Chauncey in her thoughts? Even if the other mothers were jealous, as well they might be, they ought to put a better face on it; 'twouldn't hurt them to be neighbourly. "Your poppa's nearly worn the life out of me, anyhow, with his contrariness," she added in apology. "Mike, ye're never taking your gloves off, after the time I had getting 'em on ye?"

"They've split, thank God!" said Michael, winking at Chauncey, as he wadded the gloves into a lump, and thrust them into his hip-pocket (horrors!).

"That's better! They were near killing me. Whoosh! I feel as if I could breathe now. I wish my shoes would do the same!"

"Ah now, Mike, ye're just doing that to tease me —"

"Honest to God, Norah, them gloves is *oskerspeelt*, as old Hoffmann says —"

Chauncey surveyed them both in a kind of savage misery. "Well, you don't need to make such a noise about it. Everybody'll think you never had a pair of gloves before in your life," he adjured his father in a fierce undertone. "You've made enough noise already. You oughtn't to have stamped on the floor that way when you wanted to applaud. Nobody stamps and hammers that way, or makes *any* noise. It's not like a wake."

"Faith, you're soberer than if it was one," retorted his father with spirit. "Well, I don't wonder ye feel that way, Timmie lad," he added, softening at once. "It's a grand day for ye, one that ye'll remember all your life."

"Sure, it is that! I always knew ye'd do fine ever since ye was a little lad," said Norah. "I always knew ye would! But all the same, somehow, I—I can't take it in—" Her chin quivered; the tears would come in spite of her. She was thinking of the time when he had been her little boy; he would pound on her knee with his chubby fist and order her to take him up — *order* her, mind ye, the wee devil! And sometimes he would wake in the dark night, and cry for her —

"Don't say 'you *was*'—it's 'you *were*'—what are you crying for? There's nothing to cry about. No-

body else is crying," Chauncey urged. "Here comes somebody. Do *please* try to keep quiet —!"

Professor Wilson came up, and was presented, kindly ignoring the fluster. "I'll have to borrow this young gentleman for a minute. Mr. Cook wants to meet him," he said, his hand on Chauncey's arm. "The one who gave the address, you know? Right over there."

"Mr. Cook, is it? Oh, yes! Ain't he a little whiffet of a man now! But his speech was good enough, though 'twasn't near the equal of Tim's — I mean Chauncey's — not that I'd be faulting Mr. Cook, only considering how much older he is —" A glare from Chauncey reduced Mrs. Devitt to red-faced silence, biting her lips as the tears began to rise again.

"He's a very nice fellow, though. Wouldn't *you* like to come and meet him, too?" said Wilson, sending from one to another of them the smile that always made Chauncey so restless.

"They — they can't — they've got to go presently — we've got to go — they can't possibly take the time — thank you —" he stammered.

"Go, d'ye say?" echoed Michael in astonishment; "why, we've got the whole day!"

"No, we haven't. We ought to get back — we — we have to — that is, we can't stay — you wait right here for me —" commanded the son desperately. "They really ought not — my mother isn't strong. She can't stand heat like this. She ought to be at home —" he was quite fluent now, and indeed would himself have believed everything he was saying, if it had not been for the Professor's eye on him — that expressionless yet disconcerting eye. However, Wil-

son made no remark; they walked off together to where Cook was standing. Mike and Norah, left alone once more in the middle of the crowd of pushing, congratulating, happy, excited people, not one of whom knew them or spoke to them, felt that the day had come to an end, the great, glorious day on which they had built so much, to which they had looked forward for so long — and somehow, it was a kind of disappointment after all.

CHAPTER III

YOUNG Mr. Devitt, in his anxiety for his parents' health, hurried their departure so that they may not have had time to observe that none of the other fathers and mothers and relatives of all degrees and rejoicing friends were as yet dreaming of leaving. Not much notice was taken of their own movements, singularly enough, in view of the forward part Chauncey had played in the day's ceremonies, and of his three or four years' residence during which his fellow-students and the personnel of the college must have come to know him well. As usual, isolation was the penalty he must pay for greatness — at least so Chauncey himself would have accounted for the indifference sometimes shown him; it was natural that lesser spirits should be afraid or jealous. However, as they made their way along, there came upon them a tall, heavy-set, fine-looking and most impeccably dressed gentleman about Devitt senior's own age, to wit, Mr. Amzi Loring One; and after a swift glance, he stopped short, holding out his hand and speaking with great cordiality.

"Hello, Devitt! H'are you? Glad t' see you," said Mr. Loring, in the rapid, word-clipping jargon of his tribe, the tribe of mid-Western business-men. "Got a boy here, I see. Well, well, well! Oh, *Mrs.* Devitt!" He shook hands with Chauncey, too, looking him over with a species of casual sharpness. "Let's see, you're the young fellow that made the

valedictory speech, eh?" he said, obviously not so much impressed by that performance, notwithstanding all that it implied of honour and eminence, as by the fact which he stated next: "You're lame, I notice — an accident, they told me. Pity it had to happen right now! But it's not painful, I hope — a sprain, isn't it, or something like that? I think that's what they said."

"Er — no, sir — yes — I mean it's all right," said Chauncey uncomfortably, disliking old Amzi on the spot. He was out of temper already; the lameness which he had had no difficulty in persuading himself was genuine, which at first had seemed to add so fine a touch of melancholy to his platform presence, now bade fair to become a nuisance what with people's foolish questions and the unforeseen necessity of keeping it up!

"Sure I'm going to bathe it in hot water and salt and a wee taste of vinegar the minute he gets home. That draws out the pain, d'ye mind —?" his mother was saying eagerly in her high-pitched voice with the brogue, nodding reassuringly at Loring with all the flowers on her hat bristling and quivering in unison. The young man could have ground his teeth; he hated old Loring for the way Mrs. Devitt said "Misther," for the way he himself had said "sir," for listening so good-naturedly, for the unconsciousness with which he wore his clothes that were so well-cut and seemly, for the very air of established and unconsidered habit with which he took off his straw hat in the feminine presence. Honest Michael Devitt took off *his* hat, his ridiculous top hat, with the gesture of the Irish peasant that he was; if his "Prince Albert" had had a tongue it could not have proclaimed its

status as "Sunday clothes" louder; and his son visited a bitter resentment at the contrast upon Loring's head. Chauncey's vocabulary, it is true, furnished him with no such phrases as "Irish peasant"; what he said to himself was that his father looked and acted like a *farmer*; they all did; and Loring was a pompous, patronising plutocrat!

In the meantime Mr. Loring, who was a plain man, and Mike Devitt, who was another plain man, were talking together as equals without once referring to or even remembering the difference between their bank-accounts or in their manners and language and social condition, which indeed, if brought to their notice, would have been instantly dismissed as non-existent or of no importance. If Chauncey had been less occupied with those matters he might have observed a certain anxiety overspread his father's face as he drew the other aside, and he might have detected conciliation, apology, even defence in Michael's clearing of the throat, in his: "Well now, Mister Loring, there's something I was wanting to speak to ye about—" Norah, for her part, guessed the something to be troublesome and grave on the instant, and laid a deprecating hand on her son's arm when he would have moved on impatiently.

"Wait just a minute, Timmie darling! Papa's talking business," she whispered with the awe which that topic always aroused in her. To see her so patiently unsophisticated added extra weight to Chauncey's burden of mortification.

"Well, what if he is? You act as if he was saying his prayers," he said loudly, and fetched a laugh for the benefit of any bystanders within hearing. "Women are the *funniest*! It's about time you

stopped saying 'Papa,' " he added, sinking his voice again. "It sounds so flat, you know."

"Does it now? I never thought — I will, though, after this — I'll remember," Mrs. Devitt promised him meekly, but a little absently; for once her mind was not wholly on her boy. She watched the two older men with their two strong, intent faces, Mike arguing, old Amzi giving ear, and turn about. Sometimes neither spoke for a second, their eyes meeting in a studious silence. Then, when one recommenced, the other would nod, or wag negatively, or purse his under lip, or interrupt with emphasis, or merely throw in a short word. What was it all about? "I'll get it out of Mike to-night, one way or another," the wife resolved in uneasiness. "He's been acting worried anyways, and he never wants me to know." Which was quite true; perhaps her husband had some justifiable doubts as to her discretion, but at any rate Norah often complained that she knew scarcely more of his affairs than the next-door neighbour. As for Chauncey it was somehow not conceivable either that his father should confide in him, or that he would be interested. Nobody, least of all his parents, could associate him speculatively with the "Shamrock Construction Company" in any of its activities. Even Mr. Loring, who had never laid eyes on the young man before in his life, concurred spontaneously in this opinion.

"Going to take the boy with you in the business?" he inquired as Mike and he returned to the others, the conference being ended. "Guess not, eh?" He brought his indifferently discerning gaze to bear on Chauncey again. "Little early to make plans maybe — but I guess not," he repeated. "He don't look as

if he'd do very well, cussing out the gang!" said the Ice-King, laughing tolerantly.

So they went home at last. Mr. Dalton came up to Poplar Street that evening to offer congratulations, he said, and was very loud, genial and hearty. Norah had a lavish supply of good things to eat, and perhaps a drop or two of something good to drink in spite of Father Clancy's presence; and all the neighbours came in to help the celebration along. Schlochtermailer, the butcher from down street, and the old lady Schlochtermailer, his mother, and Hilda, his sister, the one that had the book-keeping job out at Loring's, and the Morehead girls with peek-a-boo waists and their heads dressed out to the size of so many bushel-baskets in rats and puffs, and all the Muldoons down to the baby, and that little red-haired Giannetti girl that Tom Morehead was going with, and the two Casey boys with a raft of other young folks—it was a representative gathering. Chauncey stalked through the scene melodramatic and remote as Dante in the groves, surveyed by the rest with boundless admiration flavoured with some fear which was by no means distasteful to him, nor indeed to his mother; she took pride in his conscious superiority to all these people, took pride in his superiority to herself. "I was always bound he should be a gentleman, and look at him!" she said to herself delightedly. "Look at the air of him alongside them other boys! They*ain't anywhere!"

It was true; Chauncey was aware of it with a pleasant sense of security. No crudely humorous Loring Two, no purseproud Loring One, no Wilson of the disquieting smile here! And, moreover, no annoying curiosity as to what he was going to do or be; they

were all too dazzled to venture the question. Even the great Dalton, whose interest was more or less of a compliment, tactfully avoided the subject, treating Chauncey instead as an equal, and proffering him a perfect dreadnought of a cigar as man to man, with no trace of the jolly condescension he had been wont to employ. Dalton himself was another centre of admiring and fearful respect, though *he* was anything but aloof in his manner; his greatness went hand in hand with marked ability as a "good mixer," and when he took Mike off unceremoniously for a private smoke and talk on the front steps, there were not a few who envied their host that affable bullying. Norah was so tired and "let down" in her own phrase when the welcome bed-time hour arrived after everybody had gone, that she forgot her anxieties of the afternoon; it was nothing out of the way that Michael should be silent and glum when the excitement was over; he was tired and "let-down," too. But he got up bright and early the next morning as usual and had been out on the work three hours when Chauncey came yawning down to breakfast.

What happened next has been recounted. Chauncey and the men brought his father home like a warrior on his shield, only growling, joking and protesting in a style quite foreign to that classic figure; their own doctor hurried in; Father Clancy came again; Poplar Street congregated in full strength as on the night before, and later retired rather disappointed, on the whole, that events were not going to culminate in a funeral. Mr. Dalton did not hear about it until the next day when he called upon other business — for he stretched a point when he told Cook that the invalid had sent for him; it is just possible that he

was the last person in the world Michael wanted to see! However, to do him justice, the ex-councilman was concerned enough at the news of his old acquaintance's seizure to put aside his original errand. Instead he volunteered to help carry thanks and apologies to Miss Maranda, as has been seen; and was good-nature itself with young Chauncey. It is true he did not talk much, but he listened; so that by the time they started home from the Maranda visit Chauncey felt on terms of the most confidential intimacy with the chieftain. What Mr. Dalton felt, who could have guessed? His was a countenance not designed by nature for the frank expression of his thought.

"This Cook's a writer, you say?" he asked as they waited for the trolley-car. "Writes stories, hey?"

"Yes. He's well known in the — er — the intellectual world. I've met him before," said Chauncey negligently. "What do you think of him?"

"Oh, he's one of the silk-stocking crowd, I guess," said Mr. Dalton. ("Here, what you doing? I can pay my own fare — oh, well, all right, if you want to! Can't make *me* mad!) The girl is, too — 'Four Hundred' they used to call 'em years ago." He got out a toothpick and applied it diligently as he continued the subject with a fluency and enthusiasm he had not hitherto displayed. "Some class to *her*, huh? Say, d'ye know it was real, too! It was all there. I tell you when a woman's solidly pretty like she is, she can put it all over the rest of 'em, makes no difference whether she's expecting you, or where she is or what she's doing or what she's got on — and you bet their clothes *count*!" said Mr. Dalton, who, although a single man, was probably not without some experi-

mental knowledge on this point. "She's got the goods, that's why. They can't fix up with paint and powder and stuffing like the real thing." He leaned back, champing his toothpick with conviction.

Chauncey thrilled with gratification at being admitted to this relaxed and revealing mood, upon an even footing, too. When men begin to gossip about women —! He rose to the occasion, a look of infinite fatigue, infinite experience settling on his features.

"Yes, I've often noticed just what you say — only women don't interest me any more," he said languidly. "They used to when I was younger — but I'm tired of it. Too much sameness, you know. A man gets tired of it."

"Sure! Sure he does!" Dalton agreed, eyeing him sidelong with peculiar closeness. "I see you know something about 'em," he remarked seriously. Chauncey shrugged, with a brief sigh. "Uh-huh," said Mr. Dalton. An instant later, with disappointing irrelevance, he called his companion's attention to a cartoon in the comic supplement of the Sunday paper, with a sudden and violent explosion of laughter. "Those things get me every time!" he declared when he could speak coherently, wiping tears of enjoyment from his eyes. Nor did he again, throughout the journey, bring up the previous topic, though the younger man awaited it eagerly. Chauncey wanted Mr. Dalton to keep on talking about women, or, at any rate, about Eleanor Maranda; and saw too late that he himself, with his seasoned airs, had blocked the way!

The truth was that Mr. T. Chauncey Devitt, whose interest up to this date had been naïvely concentrated

on himself, now discovered with a novel and rather agreeable commotion of the senses that he was thinking about somebody else. Alas for all those young men whose broken hearts — as he freely confessed — lay at his door, and alas in particular for Lutie Morehead! Chauncey was already comparing her to Miss Maranda with the most disastrous results. Eleanor — who would have been dumbfounded to know that any such comparison was being made — was actually no better-looking, trait for trait, than the other girl, but Chauncey judged, perhaps correctly, that no one would look twice at Lutie with Miss Maranda in the room. It was her height; it was the shapely slimness of her figure; it was her fine black hair, with the wide ruffle running through it from her temples, from the nape of her neck; it was the movements of her body, sure and dainty as those of a Kentucky thoroughbred; it was — the difference eluded him, yet in its light poor Lutie became a gross, tepid, inert creature without a single allurement. Anon, the desire to know what this goddess had thought of him, Chauncey Devitt, ravaged him; he could not know! He might never have the chance of speaking to her again, might never even see her. It was devastating, romantically and spectacularly devastating; it recalled all the tales of defeated passion he had ever read in prose or verse, history or fiction. Between posing before his own inward view in a species of Claude Melnotte rôle, and an outward, visible pose as nearly simulating Mr. Cook as he could manage, Chauncey's demeanour for a while was so saturnine and so surcharged with tragedy that Mrs. Devitt was convinced something must be wrong with his bodily condition,

and treated him for divers ignoble complaints with equally ignoble remedies until his appetite and rebellious temper reassured her.

All this of course did not interfere with a resumption of the familiar amorous footing with Lutie. Only young Mr. Devitt, notwithstanding his profound acquaintance with the eternal feminine, could not have been much more subtle than the average man. For his carefully careless references to Miss Maranda, his clumsy guiding of the conversation in her direction speedily aroused Lutie's suspicions. "Seems to me you're awfully interested in the Marandas all of a sudden," she commented sharply. "*I don't know anything much about 'em, except what I hear every now and then down to the shop. You needn't to ask me.*"

"Well, on Pop's — on my father's account, you know —"

"Aw, rats! You never killed yourself worrying about him before, and he's been took the same way two-three times," said Lutie. After a moment she added: "That Nellie Maranda must be every day of thirty years old — twenty-six or seven *anyhow*. She and Loring are engaged, or as good as." And perceiving some tell-tale expression on the other's face, she repeated the news with jealous satisfaction. "Why, don't you remember, I told you that long ago? Why, I thought *everybody* knew *that*. She's *crazy* about him."

Loring again! It seemed as if he were doomed forever to be clashing with that unspeakable, insupportable personality. It did not make it any more palatable to know that their respective positions were such that Loring and he, as a matter of fact, were

not likely ever to come into contact at all. Young Amzi with his money and his tastes lived in a different world from that of Mike Devitt's son. Even business interests would scarcely bring them together; for Chauncey, about this time, went into the office of the Federated Teamsters under John Dalton's wing and eye; and Mr. Dalton felt for the Ice-King and all his kind the same fondness that a certain notorious personage is said to entertain for holy water.

The feeling cannot accurately be said to have been mutual; Amzi senior, if questioned, would probably have gone no farther than the statement that he "hadn't any use" for the other. He was too practical a man to take up time and energy merely in disapproval of anybody, his main desire in life being, as he would have said, to "get results," namely, to have something to show for every slightest expenditure, even of sentiment. He would give his view of Mike Devitt's seizure, for instance, frankly, but with a complete detachment as of a business that no way concerned him.

"Heart trouble is probably what's the matter," he said; "but worry's got a good deal to do with it, I shouldn't be surprised. He's been having trouble with his men, or rather with their union leaders, here lately. The men in general are a decent enough set, but they've got a lot of scalawags to run 'em. It's always the way. Seems their head man is that bad egg, Jack Dalton, the same one that used to be councilman down in the Thirteenth Ward — right in with the gang. The fellow seems to have Devitt right under his thumb; by George, sir, the man's afraid to say his soul's his own! He told me some of his troubles here the other day up at Cambridge at the Commence-

ment; his boy graduated same time mine did, so of course we ran across each other. I didn't want to talk business there but he would do it. We gave him the contract for this road out to Elmwood, you know, to be done by a certain date, of course, and he's been working on it right along, and everything going smooth, until here the other day he fired a couple of his tarriers for coming round drunk or soldiering on him, or something — some perfectly just cause, mind you. Devitt's an honest man and treats everybody fairly. Well, then, I guess these two hoboes were part of Dalton's outfit — handy-men of some kind, you understand — for presently along comes Dalton and orders them put back on the job, or he'll call a strike and tie everything up so Devitt can't fill his contract. He was worrying himself sick over it. 'Why, Mike,' says I, 'if I was in your place, I'd tell Dalton to go to —' Mr. Loring named the locality with vigour. 'I'd let him call a strike till he was black in the face, and if the men quit, I'd hire another gang, and let 'em stay quit! Why, they can't *do* anything to you!' I says. 'You go to the mayor, and tell him how it is, and he'll let you have police protection in case there's any trouble.' He kind of hesitated, and said Dalton was a friend of his! Great friend to have, hey? But I expect that's true, too; you know these Irish will hang together in spite of everything. And then Devitt, though he's a man of considerable force, isn't any different otherwise from most of his own workmen; he says he's for the union himself — wants to be on both sides! Anyhow, he's all sewed up with 'em and can't break away. He acts like Dalton owned him. And we call this a free country!"

However, the Elmwood Road contract was carried out on time, and to everybody's satisfaction, for Michael had a high standard. Also he made a good recovery not only from his physical ailment, whatever it was, but from the fit of the "blues" as Norah characterised it, which had preceded it. For things seemed now to be going on more swimmingly for them than ever before. The "Shamrock Construction Company" took on more work than at any period of its existence hitherto, was obliged to double its force, and ere long to open an office — an *office* with a desk and a safe, and a telephone and a stenographer, like any business man's in the Kremlin Building where it was located. That was a proud moment for Norah Devitt. Her Mike with an office! The idea pleased her infinitely more even than that of owning their own house. She could not keep the word off of her tongue; and went about among their friends, none of whom were so fortunate, with casual references to Mr. Devitt's having just gone to his office, to his having just come away from his office, to her own visits to the office, to the position and equipment of the office, until she had every one bored to the final gasp. Chauncey was in an office, too; not his father's, it is true, but that he should be wanted elsewhere seemed to Mrs. Michael an extra vindication of his abilities. She spared nobody the details of his engagement by Mr. Dalton.

"Bound and determined he was to have the boy! Don't be asking me what 'tis that Chauncey does, for I'll never tell ye. I haven't any head for business. Mr. Dalton says he's the makings of a public man in him; he says the boy's a born speaker — at meetings, ye know, and the like. He says they've often a need

of somebody like that to — to present the working-man's cause, he says. 'Fine talk, Mr. Dalton,' says I — I know him well, I talk right up to him — 'Fine talk, but what for are ye taking my Timmie — Chauncey, I mean — what for are ye taking him off hither and yon all over the country to your conventions and goings-on all the time? Haven't ye nobody to do your speechifying but just *him*? And what's it all about anyhow?' I asked him. He laughed. 'Why,' he says, 'Mrs. Devitt, it's all in the paper. Don't ye ever read the paper?' And sure enough, there it was with T. Chauncey Devitt's name printed out where he got up and said something! The paper's right there on the what-not, Mrs. Ryan, ye can see for yourself. 'Ah, well, Mr. Dalton,' I said to him, 'I'd just as lief have Chauncey at home even if you do keep him all day long at the office.' Your two boys is at the pipe-foundry along with their father, ain't they, Mrs. Hulsmann? Well, ye'd ought to be thankful ye can get them off with their dinner-buckets early in the morning, and have the place to yourself. 'Tis an awful job starting my two men, each one to their office; the day's half over before I'm through with it."

There was a solid foundation for all her innocent maternal bragging and boasting. However undefined the labours Chauncey performed "in the office," he did indeed travel about with Mr. Dalton, to Chicago, to Indianapolis, to Denver and elsewhere, and he did cut some figure oratorically, in a youthful and modest way, at all those places. As time went on his association with Dalton and by consequence with the Federated Teamsters and other industrial organisations became more intimate, his championship of the

workingman's cause more ardent and outspoken — or, at any rate, more liable to get into print. Chauncey felt that he was fulfilling his destiny, he was advancing to greatness with the superb ease and rapidity which genius commands, which he had always inwardly predicted for himself. From the moment when he received the first request for a photograph for publication, when the first reporter called upon him for an interview, he knew that he had arrived. The pinnacle was just what he had dreamed it; such the atmosphere and such the view. He had plenty of money, he dressed better than Dalton, to say nothing of his being incomparably better-looking, he was just as much talked about, just as deferentially approached, he — no, even Chauncey had to admit to himself that he owned no political followers or leaders as yet; not yet was he the power Jack Dalton was — Jack Dalton whose right-hand man he was, whom he still feared, still implicitly obeyed. Perhaps he still had a smile for Lutie Morehead — which is the phrase T. Chauncey himself would have used to describe his lingering regard; but Miss Maranda, or young Mrs. Amzi Loring, must have disappeared from his horizon with her marriage. It is certain that after that first meeting he did not see her again for over five years.

CHAPTER IV

DRIVING out towards the North Hill, and after passing through Paradise Park and the settlement of Murphyville, the visitor to these parts will come to Adams Road, which the gentleman with the megaphone on the rear platform of the sightseeing automobile will not fail to inform the passengers is one of the city's handsomest "residential districts." And thereafter he will call attention successively to the old Gebhardt place — now a private hospital — the Andrew J. Grace place, the Meigs place, and presently among the rest to the Loring place — "where the animal fountain is." This bit of description, if brief, is adequate, for though the Loring grounds are wide and varied, little but the "animal fountain" can be seen. The architect to whom Mr. Loring entrusted the renovation of the property when he bought it fifteen or twenty years ago, evolved a decorative scheme of which the most marked feature was the wall laid in bricks of mellow tones with picturesque bonding, panels, buttresses and so on, which defends the entire street frontage. It is so high that one may only see above it receding depths of foliage, or sometimes a clear space of sky, cut by the remote spires of poplars — a classic fragment like a line out of Vergil. Within, one quickly fancies steps, borders, groves and balustrades of the same cool, alien, perfect design; without, the "animal fountain" offers an incongruous, yet withal pleasing, touch of neighbourli-

ness and homely wayside welcome. It is nothing but a concrete drinking-trough, suitably disposed for the needs of dogs and horses against the wall with supports and a dado of archaic looking creatures intermingled in the friendly fashion of the Apocalypse, and a motto in rugged lettering from the liturgy of the Greek Church — it is said —: “And also for these, O Lord, we supplicate Thy great tenderness of heart. For Thou hast promised to save both man and beast, and great is Thy loving kindness.”

It was put up by young Mrs. Loring during her time, rather to the amusement of her friends, most of whom, since Society took to motor-cars, had ceased to be interested in horses, and who thought, moreover, that the carved sentiment was of an ostentatious solemnity not in good taste. They shared, in some measure, the opinion of her husband, who when he was in a bad temper would grunt that the d—d thing reminded him of Spring Grove — referring to the local cemetery — and declare his intention of having it torn down at once; and when amiable made jokes about automobiles needing water and loving kindness too — not the most brilliant of joke, but jokes at which, let it be said, Mrs. Loring invariably smiled. You would think that a man could ask no more of his wife than that she should laugh at his jokes; then what was it about Eleanor's obliging smile that would send Amzi scowling from the room, or cause him to break forth in loud unmannerly upbraidings, before the servants, before guests, anywhere, in any company? People used to say that it was very uncomfortable to entertain or be entertained by the Loring couple; there seemed to be so much “friction”; you never knew what was going to happen. The fountain,

it was reported, was a mere straws-show-which-way-the-wind-blows incident; if it had been only *that* —!

But this was after they had been married two or three years. In the beginning, no doubt, both were happy enough. Amzi admired with all his force his handsome wife who had so much sense and spirit; he liked her smile — which may not have been quite the same sort of smile as it became later — in those days, liked her readiness of tongue. He was proud of her and ineffably proud of and satisfied with himself for acquiring her; truly, as Cook had said, he was in love with her “after his fashion,” and perhaps it was no such bad fashion, as men go. Eleanor, on her side, could hoodwink herself into believing that she was happy, whether or no; it is a trick that comes naturally to women. She could put out of her mind the fact that her wedding and honeymoon — possibly the bridegroom himself! — were incredibly unlike everything she had ever pictured, at variance with all the standards and traditions of her class, accompanied by the sort of newspaper notoriety she had been trained to look upon as abhorrent, and requiring explanations that must end by becoming irksome. Amzi cared nothing for all this; he never gave it a thought, so why should she? Eleanor said to herself with bravado.

Upon review, she found that she could scarcely tell how it had happened; it was all a huddle of events. Between them, they had come to the decision, suddenly, unaccountably, without rhyme or reason — as it seemed in retrospect — and then, somehow, all at once, with stunning ease and swiftness, the thing was done! She was always able to call up irrelevant and absurdly non-essential odds and ends, such as the

untimely rawness of the September day, the look of the drugstore where she had waited down-town for Amzi, two girls gigglingly striving together as to which should pay for their ice-cream-sodas, Amzi driving up in the red car, and coming in and nervously buying chewing-gum. They had looked at each other, and said: "Oh, *here* you are!" She was in the strangest muddle at seeing him — relief, regret, a desperate impulse to turn back, a desperate resolve to go forward — the strangest muddle. Was he, too? He was silent, chewing steadily, guiding the automobile, not looking at her, but straight ahead with a frown. Crossing the bridge, she had spoken once: "How high the river is!" she had said. She remembered the 'squire's little stuffy office with the steam-heat turned on prematurely, a wasp buzzing formidably up and down the cloudy-window-panes, the 'squire himself needing a clean collar. Amzi had growled at him to "cut it out" when he facetiously suggested that kissing the bride was in order; but both men laughed when she asked in perplexity and uneasiness if they were really married now — if that was all — if they were *sure* —? The ceremony had seemed to her halting and insufficient. Some sort of negro porter, scenting a tip, was hanging about outside, and eagerly volunteered to crank the machine; three or four boys raised a yapping for "The Newly-weds." They drove off at a great pace, but once back across the river, were fain to halt — down on Third Street among the drays and car-tracks, to the liberally expressed dissatisfaction of the gentry employed thereabouts — while they tried to make up their minds what to do next! In the end they went out to Schwartz's Garden on the hill-top for dinner; it was

rather cold and gloomy at the little tables outdoors under the grape-arbours with the tanbark underfoot littered with falling leaves; they had champagne and German pancakes; she remembered how she had laughed and laughed hysterically when Amzi said that now it was over, he felt — “just like you do when you’ve sat down on a chair that was lower than you expected!” And then they took the seven o’clock train for New York.

Oh, yes, she was entirely happy — or would have been, Eleanor told herself, but for the one thing that troubled her, a haunting feeling that she had somehow neglected Fannie, done Fannie an injustice, not confiding in her, leaving her all alone to bear the brunt of what Eleanor chose to consider her step-mother’s silly tyranny. To be sure, she thought, with a kind of wistful humour, her championship had never accomplished anything but the making poor Fan more miserable, and the atmosphere of the house more uncomfortable. Nevertheless, up till now, she had contrived to take care of Fannie, to defend her; how would it be after this desertion? Characteristically enough, it never came into her head to impose Fannie on her husband; she recoiled from the idea of asking him for anything on her own behalf. That attitude of stiff-necked independence may not have been the proper or natural one for a young bride very much in love with her husband, but Eleanor deliberately closed her eyes to certain aspects of the married state, extinguished debate by telling herself again that she was perfectly happy. Except when she thought of Fannie, that is. There were times, too, when she was conscious of something unsatisfactory in her uncle’s attitude. He was tact and kindness itself, unobtrus-

ively skilful about falling in with Amzi's ways, with her own ways, invariably saying the right thing, understanding everything, making allowances for everything — in conscience she could have asked no more of him. Yet Eleanor found herself illogically resenting the perfection of his behaviour; Uncle Marshall was too abnormally *humane*, she declared inwardly with wry amusement.

Meanwhile they heard from the elder Loring — a verdict, however, which they had awaited in no suspense, for Amzi announced confidently from the first that, "it would be all right with Father." And in fact, that was what Amzi senior intimated in so many words: "All right. Keep me posted on movements. Come home when ready," he telegraphed laconically. They went back, accordingly, as soon as the "World's Series" was concluded; it was only a week. Garry met them at the station, smiling and awkward and mumbling his respects to Mrs. Loring with a red face. Eleanor had some difficulty in controlling her own shyness and excitement; but Amzi was quite the old married man by this time. He had smoked, or slept or read the paper all the way out from New York, leaving Eleanor to her own entertainment; and now nodded shortly to Garry, and took the steering-wheel in the most matter-of-fact style in the world. They drove out to the house; and as they turned into the drive between the brick pillars — the "animal fountain" was not there by the gate then, of course — Amzi One came out to the head of the steps.

He helped Eleanor out, and shook hands with her and with his son, and said: "Well, well, well! Took snap judgment on us, didn't you?" And there was a kind of irresolute pause, both of the men look-

ing to Eleanor to relieve the situation by some feminine expedient, probably an outburst of talk. "Nice day, isn't it?" said old Amzi at last, clearing his throat. Eleanor did not know whether she wanted to laugh or cry, but common-sense kept her from doing either.

"The place looks lovely!" she said, looking straight at Mr. Loring, with her head up, in a way she had. Indeed, the fine bulk of the house, with its chimneys hung with creepers, at the top of lawns and terraces descending towards a far view of the river, made a very beautiful and composed picture; old Amzi liked her straightforward admiration. For a moment she seemed to him not at all a young, freshly married woman, but like a boy — a nice, bright, companionable boy, spirited enough, but properly diffident in the presence of his elders.

"Yes, I think myself it's pretty hard to beat just now," he assented warmly. "But if you have a chance to see it in the spring — of course you will, though —" he halted, the cloud of embarrassment closing in again. "Your room — your rooms — that is, yours and Amzi's rooms are all ready. That is, I told some of these girls — the hired help, you know — to get 'em ready, and I expect they did. I expect it's all right. There isn't any lady around to look after things like that, of course, but I — I guess you'll find everything all right."

"Sure! Come on, Eleanor!" said young Amzi. "My same old room, hey, Dad?"

"Why — er — yes — only there's plenty of room — plenty more, if you want more," said the other, actually purpling all over his face. "*Phew!*" he ejaculated inwardly, as they retreated. Though of any-

thing but a romantic turn, it struck the elder Mr. Loring that young people took this thing of getting married in an astonishingly literal and phlegmatic manner nowadays. Of course a *man* —! But the girl, too, was as cool as a cucumber! “Mary and I weren’t that way when we were married — or Mary wasn’t anyhow!” he thought. His wife had been dead twenty years; she did not live long. Old Amzi himself was really not so very old — not more than fifty-five or -six, it is likely.

There was, in truth, as much room as anybody could possibly desire in the great old house which had been rejuvenated from end to end expensively, but in the best of taste, Mr. Loring having engaged a well-known firm of decorators for that sole purpose. “Oh, the happy, happy decorators, with everything their own way, and no women bothering around!” Eleanor said when he told her this; and made him laugh.

“I shouldn’t wonder if they did have a pretty good time,” he said; “I don’t know anything about it, and told them so. That’s what I was paying them for — the know-how. I wasn’t entirely satisfied either, right at first, but it’s grown on me since. Now that big mantel-piece over there with nothing on it but those stone baskets full of stone peaches and grapes and things — seemed to me a kind of a joke at first. A solid marble apple that you could knock a man over with, you know? Nothing cosy about it somehow. But I like it now I’ve got used to it.”

This was during dinner, by the end of which ceremony, Eleanor and her father-in-law found themselves on the way to being friendly enough, somewhat to the surprise of each. He was in the middle of a humorous account of some of his experiences with the

reporters, when one of these latter called. Mr. Loring counteracted young Amzi's gruff refusal to be interviewed by consenting himself with the utmost urbanity.

"Here now, you don't want to send out any messages like that!" he interposed, rising; "I'll see him. I've been seeing 'em all. It's always better to see 'em." And when the extras came out with headlines: "ICE-KING FORGIVES. RUNAWAY SON AND BRIDE RECEIVED WITH OPEN ARMS," accompanied by pictures of all of them, of the house, the grounds, the automobile and everybody and everything else even remotely concerned down to Eleanor's Angora kitten, Amzi One himself brought them to her, chuckling. "Now you see what they do to you when they want to be real nice! So you can judge what it would have been if they'd had it in for you, for any reason!" he pointed out, infinitely pleased that she joined in his laugh. He said to himself that he liked a woman that could see a joke.

Also he liked the good taste — he called it good sense — which prompted the young woman to withdraw after a reasonable while, and leave father and son together for that thrashing out of certain practical questions which was due sooner or later. Nevertheless, in a few minutes he would have been glad if she had stayed, for of the two men, the elder felt much the more awkward. He cleared his throat and fidgeted, hoping Amzi would make a beginning; but as his son sat stolidly smoking, apparently unconscious that anything needed to be said and that it would become him to say it first, Mr. Loring at length remarked tentatively: "Well, son, I guess I've got to make up my mind to your being grown up. I

thought I realised it already, but I didn't — not fully. Seeing you with a wife has kind of opened my eyes, I suppose."

"Uh-huh," said the other, unsentimentally.

"Nice girl, too, I judge. And pretty — no two ways about *that!*" said old Amzi. "By George, I never saw a finer figure on a woman!"

"Uh-huh," said Amzi Two again. He yawned.

After a silence, Mr. Loring himself went to the point; going to the point at once would, indeed, have been his preference, *pourparlers* not being at all in his line, though this time the circumstances had seemed to demand them. "Well now, Amzi," said he; "I guess it's time for us to have a little talk about what you're going to do. I haven't spoken to you about it hitherto, because a young man naturally wants to look around first, for a while, and I didn't see any reason why you shouldn't take your time to it. But a man that's got a wife, and maybe'll have a family before long, ought to have some plans about his future. Now —"

"Aw, hire a hall!" interrupted young Amzi, yawning again. "I don't need anybody to tell me all that!" He threw away the stub of his cigar, and reached for a pipe, looking up at his father from under his brows, as he began to fill it. "Say, you must have hated like sin to cut loose at me with that sermon, Dad!" he observed with a grin. He blew out the stem of the pipe. "Don't you worry! I've got it all framed up. I'm going with the Pacemakers this coming season —"

"The Pacemakers?"

"Yeah. You know. The same team I played with before. I met McFarland while I was East, and

signed up with him. Play left field, of course, like I always do."

Mr. Loring sat with his hands on his knees, listening. If any private castles of his went crashing into nothingness at that moment, his immobile face gave no sign. He merely inquired: "How much do they give you?"

"Eighteen hundred. That's good enough for a starter — of course it's only one of these alfalfa-circuit teams, I know that as well as anybody. I'm not going to stay with *them* all my days. I'll be in one of the big leagues inside a year or two, or I'll know the reason why," Amzi Two prophesied coolly. "No use blowing around about it though beforehand, you know. Get there first, and then do your blowing, if you want to blow — that's *my* idea!"

Mr. Loring did not speak for a moment. Then he asked another question: "How old are you, Amzi? I've lost count."

"Twenty-three."

"Twenty-three?" repeated the father. "Well!" He stared thoughtfully at the other lying almost on his back in the deep chair with legs stretched out and hands clasped under his head. "Twenty-three. That's old enough to know your own mind," said Mr. Loring with detachment. "I expect that's more than I was making when I was your age, plugging along down at the old B. and O. They pay bigger salaries for every kind of job nowadays. As I understand it, in the baseball business you don't have to work the whole year, either."

"'Bout eight months. Of course you've got to keep yourself in something like condition between times.

We go down to the training-camp — it's at Galveston this year — in February."

There was another prolonged silence. Mr. Loring shifted his legs, and selected a cigar for himself with minute care. Nibbling the point off of it, he said: "Humph — er — what does your wife think about it, Amzi?"

"Eleanor? She hasn't got anything to *think* about it — or say about it, or do about it, for that matter. You can't have women mixing in."

"*Oh!*" After a further meditative interval, old Amzi said: "The reason I asked was I was wondering what she was going to do while you were off on your trips. Of course she can stay right here, but —"

"Oh, she's coming along. They often take their wives. Pay her expenses yourself, of course. The management couldn't be expected to do that."

Mr. Loring moved, making an inarticulate sound. "Well but, look here, son —" said he, cautiously. "How about that, anyhow? What kind of a lot are these ball-players, and the women they have around? Seems to me —"

"Oh, Lord, now *you're* beginning!" Amzi Two ejaculated in impatient disgust. "Mr. Cook started off with that, and Eleanor wanted to know the first thing! 'See here,' I said to her: 'If they're good enough for me, they're good enough for you! I don't want any of that fool society flub-dub. You'll just come along and behave yourself, and not put on any fool airs. You've got plenty of sense, and here's where you have a chance to show it!' That shut her up. She may as well know first as last that I won't stand for any nonsense," he concluded ominously.

The elder Loring, through a halo of tobacco smoke, surveyed his son with the far, indecipherable countenance of the Sphynx. "You're old enough to know your own mind, Amzi," said he again. "And—" he added in complete philosophical detachment, as before; "*and* what you don't know you'll find out!"

CHAPTER V

MR. LORING junior's prowess in left field was such that at the end of two seasons he was drafted into one of the major leagues even as he had predicted, along with a great number of other eligibles of whom he was among the few who, it transpired, could "deliver the goods" as he himself stated. Amzi Two batted "around the 300-mark," acquired the nickname of "Butch" Loring, and invariably got a rousing reception from the bleachers when he trotted out to his position, on the home grounds. In foreign territory he was, if not popular, at least respected, owing to his ability to return any blackguarding with equal fluency, and moreover to back up his utterances by such practical demonstrations as going over to the benches and administering correction to any member of the audience whose manners displeased him, or for that matter to any umpire or fellow-player. In the course of time, these habits cost him numerous suspensions and fines which latter, however, he was said to be so well able to pay that they did not "hurt him much"; and he was also said to drink more than was seemly once in a while, but "not enough to hurt him much"—to quote public opinion again.

After the first year, Mrs. Amzi stayed at home. To be accurate, she came back very suddenly and unexpectedly in the middle of the second season, and never accompanied her husband again. At the beginning,

she had been most enthusiastic about these journeyings; according to her, they were fascinatingly informal and adventurous. She was full of humorous anecdotes of the queer third- or fourth- or even tenth-rate towns and hotels where they stopped, the people they met, the baseball magnates, the players and their ladies, the way they dressed, talked, lived; her tale was wonderfully keen and sparkling. People said that it was all done to save her face; that it was a desperate bluff to make everybody believe that she was happy in her life, and her choice, maybe to make herself believe it. Her friends pitied and admired her, and were angry with her, and gossiped about her all at once.

What happened that second season nobody liked to inquire. Perhaps some good-looking young pitcher was too attentive; perhaps the other women were jealous, and made horrid scenes; perhaps Eleanor offended the baseball circles unconsciously — or consciously! They said she was capable of it! — Perhaps her own high temper rebelled at last. All sorts of rumours went the rounds, but not even her nearest friends, not even her own sister, knew to a certainty. But that something grave and final had come to pass, they were all sure; her return was too precipitate not to arouse suspicion, to say nothing of the fact that thereafter, she remained at home, never so much as setting foot inside the ball-park even when Amzi's team was playing in town. Besides, there was that visible "friction." It was amazing — those who knew her best said — that a girl like Eleanor Loring would stand for one minute the way her husband talked and acted to her; he was so loud, so domineering, so "common" in a word. It was only what was

to have been expected; impossible to understand why she had married him in the first place! On the other hand, it could not be denied — they said — that Nellie wasn't very nice to *him* at times. You know Nellie Maranda; that nasty, quiet way she had, when she felt like it! Anyhow the whole business was dreadful, and they could not see how it was going to end.

The strange thing was that all this time Eleanor seemed to get along most amicably with the elder Loring. He must have known all about everything that was going on, he must have seen it all. But he and Eleanor were good friends enough, and there was no intimation of his having had any break with his son. Amzi senior was, in fact, very much absorbed in his business, in comparison to which baseball games or young married peoples' quarrels were to him of slight interest. One might have supposed that at his age, and with the money he had already made, he would have relaxed a little, or delegated a part of his labours and responsibilities to some trustworthy subordinate; on the contrary he worked as hard as ever he had worked at the outset of his career, up early, visiting from factory to factory, interviewing superintendents, hands, wagon-drivers, cutting down expenses here, making new installations there, experimenting, improving, vigilant, tireless, incomparably efficient. Every summer he methodically took a vacation of four weeks. "Well, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy. I guess I'll go fishing," were the words in which he used yearly to publish the approach of this event. He always went to the same place, one of the Wisconsin lakes; and when his month was up, would reappear, sunburned, mosquito-bitten and refreshed, and apply his shoulder to the wheel with more zest

than ever. At intervals he made a business-trip, to all the larger cities; he was a prominent member of the Chamber of Commerce, and frequently obliged to receive and entertain visiting commercial notables; otherwise he had no social life. Every Wednesday night he went to the theatre, and every Saturday had a party of five prosperous old cronies to play poker. The stakes were high, and there was a liberal supply of the good Bourbon County product; but these hard-headed old boys always contrived to separate at something after midnight with a perfect propriety of demeanour, and judging by Amzi One himself, turned up at the usual hour next morning, severally as fresh as so many daisies!

In all this, young Mrs. Loring naturally had no portion; but neither had her husband. Loring senior was not going to change the habits of years merely because of the presence of a son and a daughter-in-law in his household. He let them go their way, sagaciously making no comments and offering no advice. Some people reported that the younger Amzi's choice of a profession was a severe disappointment to the older; but there could have been no solid foundation for such a story. Young Amzi was a successful man, commanding a high salary in an honest trade; no father as sensible as Mr. Loring would ask more. One is reminded of that little farcical sketch *Batter Up!* by Marshall Cook, which was travelling the vaudeville circuit about this time. One character says to another with contempt: "But So-and-So is nothing but a ball-player!" The other retorts: "Sure! He's the best second baseman in the league. Now you tell us what *you're* the best man in the country at!" Mr. Loring went to see the play two or

three times, and recommended it strongly to everybody he knew.

Eleanor first won the Ice-King's regard by the unswerving tact with which she managed her relations with his servants. She was not mistress in the house; the position presented difficulties of which Mr. Loring who had dealt with underlings all his life was thoroughly aware. Eleanor must have conducted herself in accordance with old Amzi's formless creed of fairness, prudence, dignity and civility, and he knew that the performance called imperatively for a good head, as well as a good heart. A dull woman might have made him uncomfortable. As it was, Eleanor added an unobtrusive decorative touch; and she "grew on him" like the rest of the decorations. He liked coming home and dressing and going down to his handsome dinner-table and sitting in company with this handsome daughter-in-law, whom he privately considered an "elegant lady"—the most elegant he had even seen. Sometimes he wondered why it was that she and Amzi irritated each other so; *he* could get along with either one of them! From time to time he gave her presents—sums of money of such staggering proportions that Eleanor at first protested.

"But it's more than my whole income—it's more than I've ever had in my life—I don't mean at one time, I mean my whole *life*—why, I *can't* spend it!" she expostulated.

"Can't, hey?" said old Amzi, amused at her consternation. "Never you mind about *that*! You'll get away with it fast enough. There never was a woman yet that couldn't. That's all right, too. I like to see you well dressed. I like to be well dressed myself." Which was true; Mr. Loring was no fop,

but he undeniably had an exacting taste in waist-coats.

It was upon this very matter of pocket-money that they had their first — their only — disagreement; even then old Amzi was rather puzzled than put out by her behaviour. She went down town one snapping cold day in early autumn with two hundred and fifty dollars he had given her on the understanding that she was to buy a set of furs with it. Mr. Loring seldom made any conditions about the use of his largesse, but this time, having happened to see some fashionable actress with a muff and collar that took his fancy, it pleased him to order Eleanor to get the same. "She's a good deal on your style, tall and slim with black hair, or a wig — all made up, of course, but she put me in mind of you. Now I want you to get that," he enjoined her seriously. And thinking of it again as they sat over their coffee after dinner, in the sun-room: "Well, did you buy 'em?" he asked smilingly.

"Why — I — no," said Eleanor, with a troubled look. "No, I didn't. I was going to tell you."

"Two hundred and fifty wouldn't reach?" queried Amzi. "But you surely could get something on the same order, couldn't you?"

"Oh, yes — oh, it was *plenty*! Only — I bought them and then I decided not to take them."

"What was the matter?"

Eleanor looked wistfully at her father-in-law, wondering if he would understand; it did not help matters to realise suddenly that she herself hardly understood. "Well, you know I went down to get them — and I think you were very kind to want me to have them — and I really thought I wanted them myself

— I picked out a perfectly beautiful set —” she began, colouring high, moving the cups and saucers about with nervous fingers. “I saw some other things, and so I stayed quite late, shopping —”

“She’s gone over the amount!” thought old Amzi, as she hesitated; and he frowned. He disliked that; nobody had any excuse for exceeding his gifts, which, he prided himself were always ample—yes, more than ample, by George! Few men were as free-handed! “Well?” he said aloud, shortly.

The tone spurred her; she faced him fearlessly now, and told the rest of her story with that defiant straightforwardness, which at heart, pleased him. “I had sent Garry home, so I took the Adams Road car, and it was crowded with workmen going home—hod-carriers and day-labourers with dinner-pails—that kind of men, all of them dirty and tired as they could be. There wasn’t an overcoat in the lot; they had on their ragged working-clothes, not even flannel shirts, just jeans, and their overalls were plastered with clay and mud, and wet through—and it’s cold—you know how cold it is. One of them—he was a coloured man—was hanging to a strap just in front of me, and I heard him say to another: ‘Ah jus’ gotter have a pair of shoes *somehow* or othah. Ah jus’ plain *’bleeged* ter raise three dollahs *somehow* an’ git me a pair of shoes. Wintah’s comin’.’ He didn’t say it in a complaining way at all—just in the ordinary course of talk—just as if he were speaking about the weather or politics. And the other one didn’t seem to think anything of it either. And their feet were out of their wretched, broken old boots—both of them. Their feet were fairly on the ground—dreadful feet, perfectly lead-coloured with the cold,

and with great cracks in their heels! It was dreadful!"

"Well?" said Mr. Loring again as she paused, but with a different inflection now, one indicating profound and amazed curiosity. "Well?"

"I tell you it was *horrible!*" cried out Eleanor; she made a violent gesture with her two hands. "There I sat, and I had just spent hundreds of dollars for *furs*, and idiotic clothes, and here were those two men wanting nothing but *shoes* — three-dollar shoes!" She had to stop to control her trembling lips. "I *couldn't* do it after that — I *couldn't* do it!"

"Couldn't do what?"

"I couldn't go around wearing those furs," said Eleanor, fiercely. "When I got home, I telephoned and told them that I'd changed my mind, and that I wouldn't take them. Me with furs — and those poor men! If they had wanted something magnificent — something way beyond them — if they had been envying somebody, or jealous of somebody — but they only wanted shoes! Just cheap shoes — just something to cover their feet and keep them from freezing — that was all they asked. Why, they didn't even *ask* — they weren't beggars — they were just planning how they could earn enough money for shoes. It's too pitiful! It's all wrong! I have so much that I don't need at all. Look at this room! Look at this dress! It's all wrong!"

Mr. Loring obediently looked. His gaze travelled automatically all around the sun-room which was a charming place with latticed walls, interrupted symmetrically by casements clothed in bright chintz; there was a floor of tiles, there were potted plants,

cut flowers, a pleasant fire on the hearth, shaded lights serenely burning. Eleanor's fine shoulders stood out against the cushions clean and firm of outline as marble; the rich little silver service winked in front of her; the dress swept out in folds whose sumptuous texture he recognised, though he could not have named it; she was a regal picture, if, at the moment, a somewhat disquieting one.

"My — good — Lord!" he uttered. Eleanor's Uncle Marshall was familiar enough with this blazing mood, but it was something new to old Amzi. After an instant, he said with careful mildness: "Well, what did you do with your money, Eleanor? You didn't give it to the darky with the cracked heels?"

The tragic fires died down, extinguished by her quick smile; and, a sense of humour being of the very stuff of sanity, Mr. Loring was reassured, even before she spoke.

"No. That wouldn't have done him any good, you know," said Eleanor practically. "No. The cheque's in bank to my account. I put it there this morning, the way you told me to do always."

"I *thought* you had a pretty level head!" said Mr. Loring, relieved; then perplexity overtook him again. "Only, if your head's level enough for *that*, I don't see how you ever worked yourself into such an excitement over this man to begin with. Aren't you feeling well? I mean, you — you aren't feeling — er — nervous, or anything?"

"Oh, I'm all right — I'm scarcely ever sick, you know," said Eleanor, with half a laugh. "No." She looked down, fingering the tray, a little ashamed of her outbreak; then raised her eyes to his gallantly. "It's just that it seemed to me so dreadful for me to

have so much, and that poor fellow so little. I — I couldn't *stand* it. Don't you *see*?"

This she said with sufficient calmness, though urgently; old Amzi, considering her seriously perceived what seemed to him a fanatically stubborn conviction, coupled impossibly with essential reasonableness. It interested him to the point of argument — something which he had never before thought worth while with a woman.

"If I understand you, Eleanor," he said, "you've got an idea somehow that you wrong this negro man by being better off than he is. How do you make that out? What makes you think that?"

"Why, because I haven't done anything to deserve it!" Eleanor cried. "It's not *fair*! It's not *right*! It's —"

Mr. Loring waved a tranquillising hand. "I get your point," said he. "It's an accident, of course, and the luck of it happens to be all on your side. Well now, the way I look at it, the Lord is responsible for that kind of accident. They talk about all men being born free and equal. That's a fallacy — or, at least, the *equal* part of it is. He starts some people out white and some coloured; He lets some be born blind and some idiots; He fixes some so they'll always have good health like yourself, as you were saying just now, and He makes some that never draw a well breath; and He gives some people the gumption to get ahead and make something of themselves, while He fits others out to be failures and criminals and I don't know what all. You may think it's sacrilegious to blame it on the Almighty, but what're you going to do about it? It's not *your* fault anyhow. It's no more wrong or unfair for you to be in easy circumstances

while some people aren't, than it is for you to be well while lots of people are sick."

"I can't help it," said Eleanor obstinately. "It doesn't seem right. It was so pitiful. I don't do *anything*, and he works hard."

"Don't *I* work hard?" said Mr. Loring. "You know it. You've seen me. I've worked hard all my life. But I take notice nobody's worrying over *me*!"

"Well, but you're different—it's different somehow," said Eleanor, in dire confusion.

"Different? Different how?" demanded Amzi One. He got up and stood in front of the mantelpiece, looming over Eleanor, with his cigar in the angle of his mouth, with his big square jaw, his big square shoulders, his complexion ruddy and coarse but clean with the cleanliness of a decent life, a little arrogant, but self-respecting and self-confident from the soundest of reasons. "How am I different? Because I've made my way and made money? While a man's poor and works for somebody else he's to be pitied and coddled and sympathised with and made much of, hey? And the minute he gets to be well off and hires another man to work for him, it's all 'wrong' and 'unfair' and 'unjust'—is that it? The man that has to work for me is the noblest creature and the most unfortunate and abused creature on earth, and when I give him a job and pay him all he's worth, I'm taking advantage of his necessities, and I'm—what's this they call it? Oh, yes!—I'm an 'exploiter of labour'! If I'm a rich man I can't possibly be an honest man. Anybody that has the money to pay for a good house and good clothes must be skinning some poor devil of a coloured man who hasn't any shoes!"

"I didn't say that! That wasn't what I meant!" Eleanor broke in. "I meant—" she halted stammering, in a chaos, strong as ever in her belief—the belief surely of every generous soul—that she was her brother's keeper, but wholly unable to express it.

Mr. Loring waited relentlessly for her to finish. After a proper interval, he said, kindly enough—in fact, his manner throughout had been most patient and temperate—"I know you hadn't anything personal in mind, Eleanor. I just wanted to show you where that line of thought would land you. It's that kind of cheap Socialist rant that fellows like this Chauncey Devitt go around and stir up trouble with, calling themselves the 'friends of Labour' and all the rest of it. Of course, some of 'em are cranks, and they're in earnest. I don't know why the lunacy courts don't get hold of that kind oftener. But with most they talk that kind of humbug because it's popular and they get paid for doing it; they couldn't make a dollar any other way to save their lives. It's easy for a man to believe that he's being ill-treated, especially when he sees somebody else that's got more than he has; there isn't anybody hardly that knows when he has enough. That's why I say this Anarchist doctrine is so popular. But you can see how false it is. Why, take my own case when I was a young fellow starting out. I had to work for another man; did I think he was 'exploiting' me? Not that I remember. I intended some day to be in a place where I could hire *him* if I wanted to, and I was too busy getting there to bother about being 'exploited.' I had to think twice before I bought an extra pair of shoes, too, but you'd never have dreamed of pitying *me*. Or take me as I am now. I've made money, but it's not

a drop in the bucket to what Carnegie and John D. have. Do I think they wrong me by being richer men than I am? Why, I'd be crazy! You divide all the money there is in the world to-day, share and share alike, and at the end of a year the same men would be rich, and the same others would be wanting three-dollar shoes. Now you don't want to get any hysterical notions about the poor workingman; there never was a time or a country where the poor workingman had so much done for him as he's having right here and now. And if he isn't quite in your class as regards luxuries, why, that's no reason why you shouldn't have a little fun and buy what you want."

Eleanor did not attempt an answer. She rose, too, and stood beside him, and, happening to drop her handkerchief, Mr. Loring stooped with a handiness surprising in a man of his age and build and restored it to her neatly. They looked at each other smiling again, something about the small civility clearing the air.

"All the same, you haven't proved that *I* have any business to be better off than the coloured man. I'm not worth my salt in any way that I know of," said Eleanor.

Amzi One did not dispute the fact; he accounted for it as being in the normal and obvious order of things. "You're a woman," he said. "And anyhow, you don't want to get morbid about it. That doesn't do any good. You can think of something to do. Fancy-work, or something, you know."

"Yes, I could do fancy-work," Eleanor agreed. On a sudden she felt an immense respect, a kind of regretful liking, a kind of envy for old Amzi, who was so sure of his own light, who walked so straightly by it.

“Of course I believe in giving to charities and all that, you know,” Mr. Loring added hastily, on some new thought. “Everybody ought to do that. That’s only right.”

CHAPTER VI

LEAVING out that one slight ruffle, life with Eleanor and her father-in-law went on with unprecedented smoothness. The big household moved on such well-oiled hinges that she could have no domestic cares, people thought, though she took an interest in various departments, had a lovely flower-garden and an eminently practical one for vegetables, experimented picturesquely with a dairy and Jerseys, with a poultry-house and eggs, and ordered and set up the animal-fountain without a word of objection from Loring senior. In the meantime she was as busy as any other young married woman of her set with clothes and charities and clubs and her church, busier perhaps — restlessly occupied all day long. It was true she did not “go out” much otherwise; for most of the year her husband was not at home, and when he was at home, alas, there was that deplorable “friction.” When they did “go out” together, it was a painful experience for Society, even though a highly interesting one. At best, it was said, one always felt as if something might “break loose” any minute!

“She doesn’t ever seem to want to do what he wants her to do,” her friends reported, “and then, instead of one or other of them giving in, or at least keeping quiet, and fighting it out as soon as they’re by themselves — instead of that, why, he bawls at her and orders her around, and then she says something that

doesn't sound like *anything*, but it always makes him *perfectly furious*! I've seen him get so mad he'd take her by the arm and fairly shove her along — in public places, like the theatre or the Country Club, you know, or anywhere — in somebody's house, for that matter, *he* doesn't care. Right before people! I'd *die* if any man treated me that way, where everybody you know can see and hear the whole thing. It's so *common*! I *don't* see how she stands it!"

Mrs. Juliet Maranda heard the stories with a sad but meaning smile, nodding quietly. "She *would* marry him! I can't imagine what it was about him that attracted her; he and his father both seem to me to be typical *nouveaux riches* — so loud and vulgar. I believe Eleanor thought him very handsome; you know in the nicest families there will be a strain of the most unaccountable low taste cropping out now and then."

"That is very true, Juliet," said Mr. Marshall Cook, to whom this remark was addressed. "You are such a keen observer!" And then, with a face of the kindest concern, he inquired: "By the way — I haven't been back here for so long, you know — talking about people, do you mind if I ask how your brother and his family are getting along?"

"Of course I don't *mind*, Marshall," said the lady, drawing herself up in a species of furious calm. "I don't know why you should think I would *mind* being asked about Homer. They are doing very well, thank you. It would be a good thing if Eleanor gave people as little occasion for scandalous gossip."

"I haven't heard any scandalous gossip about Eleanor yet," said Cook, innocently. "Unless what you've been telling me is scandal. Is it?"

"Certainly not! I never repeat scandal," said Mrs. Maranda indignantly. "You *know* I don't. I said scandal because — that is — well, the whole thing is very disagreeable. People are inclined to lay the blame on *him*, but it takes two to make a quarrel; I always tell everybody that in justice they ought to remember *that*. Maybe after this they will really believe at last that Eleanor is very, very difficult."

There was truth in that, too, Cook admitted to himself, though he never would have to Mrs. Juliet. He went out to dine with the Lorings — a ghastly experience. The master of the house was away on his annual fishing excursion, but young Amzi's team happened to be playing in town that week, a series of four games with the "Black Sox," so "Butch" Loring was at home, and welcomed his relative-in-law with a surly amiability. He rather liked the little man, who "hadn't any high-brow airs about him." The other guests were a well-known sporting gentleman, to wit: Andy Farrell, the billiard champion, and another whom the host called "Doc." Cook did not catch his surname, but discovered in the course of talk that he had acquired his title legitimately from the College of Veterinary Surgeons, and had afterwards become eminent in baseball society through his abilities at manipulating sprains, sore muscles, etc. His wife was along, too, a large, fleshy, flashy lady, the first sight of whom moved Cook, who nevertheless was the least snobbish of men, with horrified sympathy for his niece. But Mrs. Doc turned out to be almost pathetically harmless, bleached hair and all. She sat in silence, completely overawed by the huge, dim, costly place, by the frigidly decorous servants, by the perfect manners of her hostess, eating timidly not nearly

as much as she wanted, saying "No, sir, I wouldn't wish any," when the butler offered a dish, watching Eleanor to see which fork the latter used, and changing from one to another of her own in agonised uncertainty. Even Cook, with all his tact and kindness, could not set her at ease; he thought that Eleanor might have, but Eleanor did not try! On the contrary, there she sat, cool, impervious, polite, apparently unaware of young Amzi's scowl at the other end of the table. She made even her uncle uncomfortable. Wet blankets were nothing to it; the atmosphere was fairly leaden. Amzi Two ate sullenly; the other men were alternately awkwardly loquacious, or when Eleanor turned her gracious eyes on them, awkwardly dumb. Cook talked on desperately; in the extremity he actually talked about himself!

"Oh, did *you* write that piece that Charlie Duke starred in, last winter?" Farrell said in surprise.

"*Batter Up?* Yes, I wrote that."

"I didn't know you were a writer."

"I daresay you thought I was a monologue artist, Mr. Farrell," said Cook, grinning uncontrollably. "No wonder!"

The other looked uncertain as to how to take this, until "Doc" jogged him in the ribs, when they both burst into abrupt guffaws which ceased with equal abruptness as they glanced apprehensively towards Eleanor.

"Thanks, mister, I wouldn't wish any," said the veterinarianess, for at least the tenth time.

"You'd better not take that to Mrs. Loring either, Hanson," shouted young Amzi savagely as the butler neared Eleanor. "She don't want it. It ain't good

enough for her. Nothing or nobody here is good enough for her!"

After an instant of uneasy silence, Farrell said in mock reproach: "Aw, say, Butch, that's an awful slam at the rest of us!" And he and Doc laughed again, encouraged by the fact that Eleanor herself joined them with a relish which occasioned her uncle considerable disquiet.

"What's going to happen *now*?" he thought, eyeing young Amzi's lowering countenance.

"Here you, bring another bottle, and have it cold!" the latter ordered; and having drunk, he addressed another remark to the table in general. "D'ye know that joke about married men living longer than single men? The answer is they don't live any longer, it only *seems* longer!"

Cook ha-ha'ed; everybody made anxious haste to ha-ha, in fact, except Mrs. Doc who observed Eleanor's smile in naïve wonder.

"I've found out that's true, too," said their host, filling his glass again — whereat the other two men exchanged a significant glance. "I've found out something else," said Amzi Two, glowering impartially at everybody. "You'd think it would cost a married man just twice as much to live, wouldn't you? Well, it don't. It costs three or four times. That's another joke on him."

"And a very good joke, too," said Eleanor, sweetly. "As often as I hear it, I laugh just as much as I did the first time years ago." And laugh she did, with an appearance of the keenest enjoyment!

Cook found himself tongue-tied in absolute blankness of mind; Farrell said presently: "Say, that's

another slam, ain't it?" and pumped up a nervous laugh. Young Amzi got up with something very like an oath —

And just then, by a stroke of luck, Mrs. Doc "swallowed wrong," coughing and strangling and turning purple in the face, so that, in the noise and alarm and excitement incident to this catastrophe, the exhibition of "friction" preceding it, passed, somehow, into the background. The evening wore through, nobody knew how. Cook went away in Farrell's automobile with the rest of them to whom, as usual, the little man knew how to make his company acceptable.

"Sharkey would make Butch cut out that booze if he knew about it," the billiard-player said confidentially, naming the manager of young Amzi's team.

"He don't take enough to hurt him," said Doc.

"No. Makes him kinda ugly, that's all."

"Bet you he's ugly as sin anyhow when he feels like it!" said the lady of the party. "You got a toothpick?" And, being supplied, she leaned back in her corner, exercising the instrument with a sigh of comfort. "They hit it off pretty well, I don't think! She's pretty, ain't she? But didn't she set there like a stone image, though? Gee! You couldn't pick your teeth in fronta *her*!"

Cook saw his niece once more during his visit which, as usual with him, was of the briefest; it was the day after that calamitous dinner, when he went out to say good-bye. Eleanor was alone; they had a delightful hour in the pretty little latticed tea-house in the garden, talking about the Japanese iris just then in opulent bloom, about Eleanor's farming experiences as compared with Miss Bessie Grace's, about Marshall's last play and the things the critics had said for and

against, about everything under the sun, in short, except the domestic infelicities of young Mr. and Mrs. Amzi Loring. The author scarcely knew whether he had hoped for or dreaded Eleanor's confidences; but hope and dread were alike groundless as he told himself afterwards not without disdain for his own misjudgments. He might have known that Nellie would say nothing to *him*. However disappointed or disillusioned or tried in spirit she might be, it was not in her character to ease herself by talk — unless upon one of her violent impulses; even then she might rage, denounce, excoriate, but she would never feebly complain. "Nell is verily the captain of her soul," he mused. "I don't know what her rudder is, or how she directs it. It's a gallant ship, but Lord! What a cruise!" The trite figure made him smile; but he thought of reefs and desert beaches, and wondered again what the end would be.

"She didn't even mention her husband's name once. He might have been dead, or rather he might never have existed! It doesn't seem possible for things to go on much longer this way," he said to Fannie. "They can't even make a show of getting along, as most people would in common decency and consideration for outsiders. They don't seem able to let each other alone. He tries to cram these friends of his down Eleanor's throat — the most futile piece of bullying that ever was! Why, the friends themselves don't like it — they were bored to death. And Eleanor retaliates by acting, in that indescribable way of hers, like Satan himself. More futility! Do you suppose this is the way they have lived ever since they were married? Five years? Good Heavens! It can't keep on — only I don't see what Nellie's to

do exactly — I don't see what escape there is for either of them, that wouldn't involve a lot more publicity — you'd think they'd have had enough of that at the time of the marriage —”

“Oh, Nellie wouldn't ever get a divorce, if that's what you're thinking of, Uncle Marshall,” Fannie interrupted, peering at him through the large round spectacles she had recently been obliged to mount, with shrinking horror at the suggestion. Cook had found Fannie fatter and paler than ever this time, from confinement to the house and want of exercise, he conjectured; what with that and her imperfect eyesight and a tendency to stumble in her walk which she had developed of late, she seemed to him unwarrantably old and wilted. “It would be so *common*,” she said anxiously. “You've forgotten how it is here, you've lived so long in New York. But *nobody* you *know* gets divorced *here* — only once in a *long* while, and then they keep it very quiet. And we're Episcopalians, too. I'm sure they wouldn't. I mean *him*, too. I think he'd hate it — not the way Eleanor would, of course, but just as much. I'm sure they wouldn't.”

“They probably couldn't very easily, anyhow. Nothing to get divorced about, no reasonable cause, that is — incompatibility, of course. But everybody talks anyhow; people are prone to conclude that incompatibility is a mere blind — that there's really something dreadful behind it,” said Cook. “In this case it would happen to be true. Incompatibility describes the trouble to a nicety. But what would Nellie do, supposing they did separate? Come back here to live? I'm afraid that wouldn't work very well either.”

He would not offend his niece's unreasoning sense of duty and loyalty by picturing with unkind detail Mrs. Maranda's attitude in the event of so complete and inexpensive a vindication as Eleanor's return; Fannie was well able to imagine it for herself, Cook reflected, hearing already in fancy his sister-in-law's complacent I-told-you-sos. After all, few people would have better reason to be complacent, to be securely convinced of their own wisdom and saintliness. The entire community would behold and acclaim it.

"No. Nellie and Aunt Juliet never seem to agree about anything, you know," said poor Fannie. "Even now when she comes over to see us, they sometimes have one of — of those *times* — you know? I don't know what *makes* Nellie do it — only Aunt Juliet *is* — well, she *does* — of course, she doesn't *mean* to, but —"

"I know," said Marshall. Then, after a minute, he added with prodigious speculative gravity: "The classic idea of hell is very foolishly exalted, I think. Everlasting fires and torments and all that — it's altogether too spacious, too grandiose. Hell is probably a cheap, every-day place, full of cheap, every-day tribulations. You go round and round, beating yourself against the shabby walls, and there is no outlet, no release — Don't mind me, Fan; this is a mild form — I'm never violent! So you don't believe that Eleanor would consider a divorce. Has she ever said anything to you about it?"

"Why, no — that is, not *exactly* — she never *exactly talked about separating* from Amzi —" Here Fannie hesitated, so that Mr. Cook had space to admire the subtlety of the feminine powers of expression, and interpretation — "Only — well, once she

told me that if she should ever be left alone to take care of herself, she knew what she would do. She said she'd go straight into Associated Charities work. Take a salary for it, you know. She's done work for them as a volunteer already; they're glad to have ladies — people that have been taught something about tact and discretion, so as not to offend the poor people, or antagonise them. They say it's very hard to get hold of just the right person, even among ladies," said Fannie, biting off a thread. "That seems odd, doesn't it?"

"Not so very odd," said Cook, dryly. "It takes a good deal of intelligence to be kind. Well, Eleanor is intelligent. I should think she could do that kind of work very well."

"Why, Uncle Marshall, she *does* do it very well! They say she's wonderful at it. She gets along with them, and doesn't try to manage them or patronise them or pry into their affairs, and they all like her. She's worked mostly for the Maternity Society, I believe, and that's often rather dreadful — going to all kinds of places and looking after those poor women. Sometimes their husbands have gone off and deserted them, and often there hasn't been any husband at all. Eleanor has to find out and report, and see about nurses and — and baby-clothes," Fannie explained, colouring faintly — "and do it all in a *nice* way without hurting their feelings, or making them unhappy. You'd be surprised to see how good she is at it!"

"No, I'm not surprised," her uncle declared warmly. "It's just what I should have expected of her. Eleanor would succeed in anything she made up her mind to succeed in, for that matter, but if she likes this and is interested, you can't ask anything bet-

ter. Only as a means of support, I don't know whether it's very practical —"

"Well, she didn't say she was going to *do* it. It was only *in case*, you know?"

This was another subject which Eleanor had not touched upon in her talk with him. Cook wondered why. "She must know that I would acquit her of ostentation about her good works. She may simply have thought that I wouldn't be interested — but that doesn't seem likely either. I give it up! It's evident I haven't plumbed Nellie's depths yet, after having known her from a baby," he decided.

CHAPTER VII

MR. COOK'S visit and the sojourn in town of Amzi Two's team came to an end about the same time; and Eleanor went back to her daily affairs perhaps as much relieved by one departure as by the other. She had taken on the share of another Maternity Society worker during the latter's hot-weather absence, and it kept her busy; but she wanted to be busy. In having her mind and hands full all day, and going to bed at night tired out, she satisfied her restlessness — or punished her discontent with things as they were, as she herself had made them! Besides she really liked the work, and was gratified at her own success in it. "I always knew I could do something of the kind," she said to Miss Penry, the district visitor from the Deaconess' Home with whom she often fell in on her rounds. "I've always wanted to experiment and see if I couldn't make the people like me; and they really *do*, you know, most of them. Sometimes the women are quite ferocious at first, and want to shut the door in my face, but I always make friends with them in the end. That's one of the things that make it so interesting; you never know how they are going to take you, or what prejudice you may have to overcome, or how you're going to go at it. It's something new and different all the time."

Miss Penry surveyed her kindly, thinking that nobody could very well help liking anything so youthful,

so generously enthusiastic, and above all so pretty. Eleanor, while quite aware of her own good looks, would have been astonished to know of their conquering quality — much more astonished than pleased; the idea of winning by mere beauty would have humiliated her. It made her allies unconsciously. “I just love to look at Mrs. Loring,” was the remark that most frequently followed her, coupled sometimes with such adjectives as “cute” and “sweet,” and “stylish” or, in a flight of language, “magnetic.” Miss Penry, who had a plain, good face and went about in her black Deaconess’s uniform and bonnet and big, ugly square shoes, a real angel of mercy, charity and kindness, if ever one walked this earth, was herself unenviously fond of looking at Mrs. Loring.

“You want to take care and not wear yourself out,” she admonished her maternally. “Bye and bye, it won’t seem so new and different. I’ve been a charity-worker twenty years now, and it’s much the same thing right along, seems to me. Same kind of ignorance, same kind of foolishness, same kind of wrongdoing over and over again, day in and day out. There are times when it looks as if all your work went for nothing, and it gets to be pretty discouraging. But work *does* count, you know, it *does* count after all. The thing to do is to keep at it anyhow.” She had not much faith that Eleanor would keep at it anyhow, to tell the truth; Miss Penry had seen a good deal in her twenty years.

Eleanor not only made this and other acquaintances; she had adventures — or what seemed like adventures to a young woman of her conventional upbringing. There was the family on the shanty-boat at the foot of Lancaster Street; there was the mulatto

chambermaid in the Broadway rooming-house; there was the dreadful place at the corner of Sixth and Silver Streets upstairs over the saloon. Even Eleanor, who had been undaunted by vicious dogs, vituperative old hags, drunken men, and nearly every variety of disease and dirt, discerned something in the aspect of Sixth and Silver Streets that gave her pause. The entrance was between two buildings, down a passage with a trickle of foul water through the middle of it, into a little courtyard, a mere air-shaft, of which she could just catch a glimpse. The blind brick walls were not three feet apart; midway in one of them there was a sinister door. She stood, rallying her forces against the fancy that somebody might reach out and snatch her through it, and the other fancy that at the very moment she was being spied upon abhorrently from secret cracks and peepholes, when there came along, walking with prodigious strides, a tall, lean, harsh-faced gentleman whom she recognised and spoke to with a warmth the remembrance of which afterwards rather amused her. She really did not know him very well, and at that mainly by report. It was that Mr. Kendrick, the same one who had been engaged to, or at least "hanging around" Miss Gilbert for so long; that fact alone would have placed him for Eleanor and her contemporaries, for Miss Gilbert was one of the "old girls" whose set came out years before Nellie Maranda's. "Oh, Mr. Kendrick!" said Eleanor then, with the cordiality of her relief.

He stopped, staring. "Mrs. Loring?" He stared again, with an effect of looking from her to their surroundings incredulously.

"Charity," said Eleanor succinctly.

"Oh!" Once more he stared about, and back at her. "Got lost somehow?"

"No, indeed. I was sent here by the Maternity Society. This is the place, isn't it?" She showed him the address noted on a slip of paper. "Right in there? Only it looks—do you suppose it's all right?"

Mr. Kendrick intimated indirectly that it was not all right, first by guessing that there had been some mistake made, and then by wanting to know if the charitable societies didn't have any men they could send to some places, his expression indicating that he had no very high opinion of the intelligence and capacity of the charitable societies. He heard Eleanor's explanation patiently, however, and then suggested that there was a drug-store about two blocks away on Poplar Street in a respectable neighbourhood, where she could wait, if she liked, while he went in here and made her investigations for her. "You can't stand around on the sidewalks here, you know," he said authoritatively.

"That's ever so kind of you," said Eleanor in grateful surprise; he was the last man in the world from whom she would have expected so much good-will. "I hate to take your time, though. Can't I just go in with you?"

"No," said Mr. Kendrick, uncompromisingly, marching her along. "I guess there's been some mistake made, or they wouldn't have sent you here," he repeated, as if in apology. "It's not out of my way. I'm going over here on Amelia Street, to see a tenant we have, anyhow."

"Oh, Amelia Street? There's a place there I've got to go to, too. Is *that* all right?"

"Oh, yes. Amelia — Poplar — Clinton — everything north of Silver is all right. Poor people, but decent, all of them — the kind that *work*, you know," said Mr. Kendrick, as if that were amply descriptive. "It's perfectly safe."

Eleanor tried to recall what she had heard about the geography of the "red-light district," but unsuccessfully. She might have been in the very heart of it!

"I suppose there *was* some mistake," she said. "The ladies on the Board give us these assignments, just as the applications for help happen to come in. I don't think they know anything about the places."

"No, seems not," Mr. Kendrick agreed dryly. "Well, *I* know. Any man that's been in the real-estate business in this town as long as I have — !"

Eleanor was moved with sudden curiosity. Why not ask him a question or two, even if the subject were, generally speaking, taboo? It would be for her own future guidance, and when all was said, she was a married woman, and he a middle-aged man of iron respectability, as everybody knew. "Mr. Kendrick," she said, "who owns the disreputable houses?"

He took it in the most matter-of-fact manner imaginable. "Why, disreputable people, mostly. I couldn't tell about all of 'em, off-hand, of course. But if you mean the one you were at just now, why, I happen to know that that's owned by a man named Dalton, one of the corrupt political gang here. *You've* probably never heard of him, but —"

"Oh, yes, I remember. Jack Dalton?"

"Yes. I believe he poses as out of politics now, but it doesn't make any difference what he pretends he is or isn't, the fellow's a notorious scoundrel. He

has a good deal of that sort of property scattered around all over town. And he's only one out of a lot, you know. I don't suppose we're worse than any other city of our size, but we've got our share of Daltons — plenty of 'em!"

"Are there? And *that's* one of the things they do, is it?" said Eleanor, feeling herself on the way to a greater enlightenment than Mr. Kendrick knew. "I don't see why the respectable property-holders — but then I heard — who owns the rest of the places, besides those men? You don't mind telling? I mean, is it a question I ought not to ask of a man in your business?"

He looked momentarily dumbfounded, so that Eleanor wondered if he thought it a question that ought not to be asked of any man in any business. "Mind telling?" he echoed. "Why, no! It's all right if you want to know. You have to go around these slums more or less, I suppose. Why, it's just as I was saying to you just now; they are other fellows of Dalton's stripe — gangsters — saloon-men — professional gamblers — any rascal that's out for the easy money. Often, too, a woman that's running a house will own it. I guess it all sounds pretty bad to you, Mrs. Loring," Mr. Kendrick ended with a kind of regretful tolerance. "But you probably realise if you've been at this slum-work any time at all that these things have to be — or they *are*, anyhow, in spite of law and morality."

"The reason I asked you, and the reason I thought maybe you — you wouldn't want to tell me on account of your business associations, or something —" Eleanor said, embarrassed but straightforward according to her habit, "was that I heard that all that

kind of property in town was owned by three or four of our most wealthy and prominent people — socially prominent and supposed to be irreproachable, you know. That seemed to me very dreadful, Mr. Kendrick; it was certain to be people I knew, maybe somebody on this very Charitable Board. To think that their money came from such a source!”

Mr. Kendrick let pass the fact that she had thought he himself might be interested to safeguard the reputations of these devotees of Mammon. “Whoever said that didn’t mention any names, I expect,” he said with deliberation. “Probably couldn’t.”

“It was our minister,” said Eleanor quickly, feeling somehow that that reverend gentleman’s own reputation was endangered. “He said it last Sunday in a sermon on Dives and Lazarus. Mr. Seymour — don’t you know him?”

“Yes. I go to All Saints myself, when I go anywhere. Mr. Seymour’s a good man and means well, but I think he’s mistaken about that statement,” said Mr. Kendrick, dispassionately. “If you stop to consider, you’ll see why I question it. This is a city of more than three hundred and fifty thousand people, among whom there are a great many rich men. To find out which ones owned real estate here, and where and what the pieces were, and under what conditions and to whom they were leased or rented or made to render income — I say to find out all that about every rich man in town would take an expert’s whole time for about a year, between the city and county records, and the tax-duplicate, and the land-and-title guaranty companies, and the real-estate offices, and the property itself. I never saw Mr. Seymour in any of those places, and I’m there every day myself. That’s why

I think I'm qualified to judge. I don't think it would be humanly possible for Mr. Seymour to have conducted an investigation like that and attended to his church and parish duties faithfully besides — as he always has done, in my observation. It looks to me as if he made that statement, repeating something he had heard but hadn't taken the trouble to verify."

It looked that way to Eleanor, too! Vexation invaded her to review the disquiet into which she had been thrown by an utterance which, because it was delivered with weight from the pulpit, she had not recognised for mere gossip. The very simplicity of Mr. Kendrick's rebuttal piqued her; she might have had sense enough to think out anything so obvious herself! But there she had sat, with all the rest of the congregation, and swallowed the sensational indictment down whole, not a soul, as far as she knew, "stopping to consider." Instead, as they walked away, she remembered overhearing: "Well, some of these godly old skinflints got *theirs* to-day!" and "I tell you, I respect Mr. Seymour a good deal more for having the nerve to get up and tell the truth like that, at the risk of alienating his best-paying parishioners!" and — among the women, alas! — "Who do you suppose he meant? The So-and-Sos? They say —" All of them, herself and Mr. Seymour included, seemed to her now childishly credulous, childishly irresponsible. Mr. Kendrick unwittingly supported the idea by going on explaining, patiently, laboriously, in words of one syllable, as it were. One glance into his face showed Eleanor that he doubted if it might not be a waste of time, but thought it his duty to try to set her right, if possible.

"In my business experience," said he, "I have

never run across any reputable man who made a practice of dealing in that kind of property. To begin with, it's not a good business proposition; it's too uncertain and too much trouble. Those people are all the time getting into hot water with the police, and being raided and hauled up in court, and sometimes there's a murder, or some other pretty bad scrape; nobody wants all that scandal and publicity. The owner would have to attend to the property and collect the rents himself, because —" said Mr. Kendrick, with a painstaking plainness that rebuked Eleanor more than the sharpest words — "because he couldn't get any honest, respectable agent to do that sort of work, and he couldn't trust anybody else. Well-known church members — I suppose Mr. Seymour intimated that that was the kind of man — wouldn't care to be seen around such neighbourhoods, and most wealthy men are too busy with big things anyhow, to take the time. You see how impracticable the whole thing would be. Of course I'm only speaking from my own observation; but I think if the next time you hear anybody say anything like that, you will make an inquiry, you will find that things are about as I have stated."

"I'm very much obliged to you, Mr. Kendrick," said Eleanor humbly. The speech sounded so inadequate to her that the next moment she burst out in her heady fashion: "I think we're all a set of fools — the rector and all of us!"

"Oh, no, I wouldn't say *that*," said Mr. Kendrick.

He deposited her at the drug-store, much as if she had been a rather valuable package, went off and returned in an incredibly short space of time with a complete report of conditions at Sixth and Silver, to

which he added some recommendations of his own, uncommonly pointed, practical and withal kindly. "He's really interesting in his way," Eleanor afterwards told her friends, who were unanimously of the contrary opinion. "He probably can't talk about anything but his business, of course. Still I can see how Miss Lorrie Gilbert might like him."

Backed by his assurance that the locality was perfectly safe, she hunted up the other address she had been given: "Mrs. Michele Giannetti, 21 Amelia Street," and found it to be a fruit store, with a stalk of bananas swinging beneath the awning, and baskets of peaches and tomatoes displayed on the pavement with a fine disregard of the Health Officer's regulations. Inside, in a glass counter, there were some unholy looking cakes and candies; fly-paper was spread at random amongst the stock. Eleanor made her way in, and a swarthy Italian woman slouched forward, with a swarthy little boy barely clad in an undershirt and drawers trailing after her. From the litter of feathers and smell of scalding in the rear of the place, Eleanor gathered that they had been plucking a chicken; in fact, a cat was busy in one corner with a bit of the offal.

"Mrs. Giannetti?"

"Yes, ma'am. You want-a buy, eh?"

"No. I came to see about the sickness in the house you know?"

"Seekness?" said Mrs. Giannetti. She shook her head. "Me, I don' know heem. Tony!"

The boy briskly addressed Eleanor. "Me mudder she can't talk United States so good. She ain't ever learned anything but dago," said he. "Who're youse lookin' for?"

"They said Mrs. Giannetti. It's — it's about the baby — your baby," said Eleanor, moving nearer to the woman, and lowering her voice, mindful of the child's presence.

Mrs. Giannetti, however, exclaimed in a loud tone of astonishment: "Babee? Me? *Babee?*" and followed this up with a shout of laughter. "W'at you t'ink 'bout dat, eh? Me, I don' get any more babee, lady! I been forty-nine year; I get married t'irty-tree year, fourt' of nex' mont'," she explained circumstantially, as soon as she could speak for mirth. "I should worry for get babee, eh?"

"Aw, shut up, you big simp!" said Tony impatiently. "Betcha she means Lina. W'y, she ain't *sick* yet, lady," he said to Eleanor. "If youse th' nurse, like th' other lady said she was goin' t' send, w'y, youse way off! 'Tain't time *yet*."

"She come in five week just," said Mrs. Giannetti, who appeared to have a turn for statistics. "You got-a close for *bambino* — leetl' close, eh?"

"We're going to send some. I came to see how she was, and to tell her about them — how to take care of them, you know," said Eleanor. "I'm sure she's the one. If you'll tell me where to find her —?"

"Sure!" said Tony willingly. "It's upstairs. I'll show youse." And, piloting her towards the back, he further volunteered: "she's me sister, but her name ain't Giannetti, her name's Morehead. That's w'at put youse in wrong. I guess th' other lady didn't know."

"Morehead?" said Eleanor, startled.

"Yeah. Lina's married all right, all right. She's had two kids a'ready, only they both died. But that's going some."

They paused, panting, on the top step.

"How old are you, Tony?" Eleanor asked him.

"'Leven," said Tony, rattling the door-knob.

Mrs. Lina Giannetti Morehead, with the peevish, discoloured face and ungainly figure of a woman in her state of body, came heavily and opened to them. "Well?" she snapped. "What you coming home this time of day for? *Oh!*"

"G'wan! 'Tain't Tom, it's th' lady from th' S'ciety," said her brother, and introduced the other to Eleanor, jerking his head. "That's her!" He retreated down the stairs, yodeling. Mrs. Morehead remained inhospitably in her doorway, looking Eleanor up and down.

"Well?" she demanded again, querulously.

"May I come in?"

Mrs. Morehead grudgingly opened the door a little wider; in the very act, her opposition suddenly gave way to listless indifference. "It don't look fixed up, but I can't help it. I can't do anything, seems like. I'm so tired all the time," she complained. Indeed, the briefest glance around the two rooms, one opening into the other, revealed that they could not have been fixed up for a long while; dust of an imposing antiquity, to Eleanor's alert housewife's eye, had collected in corners, on the window-panes, in the meshes of the lace curtains draping them; it furred all the strands of the red and green and tinsel rope portière. The bed stood unmade with repellent blankets; unwashed dishes, pots, plates, saucepans crowded the top of the stove, the sink, the table; and underneath the latter lay a hambone enveloped in a cottony fuzz of green and white mould. On the bureau at Eleanor's elbow, her casual survey itemised a soiled blue satin pin-

cushion, with odds and ends of mock jewellery stuck into it; a jar full of a pink compound that looked like rouge; a bottle of brilliantine; two small tin canisters of talcum powder; a white canvas shoe; a comb full of hair; a half-sandwich of rye bread and Schweitzer cheese; sundry rags; a copy of an obscene little weekly paper entitled *The Midnight Bell* of which she had heard, with "SPICY DETAILS OF WIFE'S INFIDELITIES ENRAGE HUSBAND" in head-line type on the outside page; and finally, very active and inquiring amongst the litter, a large black cockroach. Mrs. Morehead saw this other visitor, too, and made a perfunctory dab at it, rolling into a sort of bat, one section of an ancient pair of corsets that was lying conveniently at hand. "Them things get all over everything," she remarked, after missing her aim, sinking back exhaustedly. "I haven't got any time to keep after 'em. I just can't get through anything, long as I'm this way."

The words, the whole hopeless picture went to Nellie's heart. Poor, unkempt, untaught, unhelped and helpless creature, what could be expected of her? Eleanor thought of her own friends whom she had seen in the same condition, daintily nested, petted, cheered and waited on, with her familiar shamed sense of injustice and rebellion. "Of course you can't do anything," she said in ardent sympathy; "it's very hard all this part of it, waiting so long, and feeling so wretched. But in a little while now it will all be over, and it will be so nice when you have your baby. Do you want a boy or a girl?"

"My God, I don't care! One's as bad as the other, I guess," said Mrs. Morehead without interest, but eyeing her guest's hat speculatively. "I just wish it was over and done with, that's all, I just wish I could

get out on the street again and see somebody and get some clothes!" she burst out fretfully. "I'm dog-tired of this."

"I'll bring you some clothes — that's what I came to see you about," Eleanor eagerly began to tell her; "there's a bundle of all the things the baby has to have right at the first —"

"The *baby*? *Baby* clothes? *Oh!*" ejaculated its prospective mother with an utter lack of enthusiasm.

"We — we thought that would help you a little," said Eleanor uncertainly; she was a good deal taken aback. "We thought maybe you might not have all you needed —"

"Yeah. All right. You can leave 'em."

"Well, they've all been nicely washed and ironed and then sterilised, you know, so that they will be absolutely clean to put on the new little one," said Eleanor, coming to what she always felt to be the most delicate point in these negotiations. "And so the bundle is not to be opened until the very last minute, for fear of — for fear of accidents. Something *might* happen to get into it, you know, even with all your care."

"My God, I ain't got any time to be opening baby-bundles, anyhow. You can just leave 'em," said the other shortly.

"We thought that you might not have been able to get quite enough," Eleanor said, in fear that she had been guilty of tactlessness. "One has to make so many things for a baby —"

"Oh, I ain't made none. I ain't had any time. It's all I can do to get around," said Mrs. Morehead, with a return of languor.

Eleanor felt her sympathy that had been so sincere

and spontaneous oozing away, like Bob Acres' courage. She strove to recover it self-reproachfully; and was casting about for a cheering or consoling speech, when somebody came noisily up the stairs, and at the top, without any formalities, thrust open the door, with a loud challenge: "'Lo, Lina!"

"'Lo!" said the mistress of the establishment, without stirring.

The newcomer stepped inside. It was a plump, florid young woman, in a skin-tight soiled white skirt, a skin-tight openwork blouse, and a narrow white kid belt clamped like a vise around the middle of her, giving, between the inordinate bulge of her bust and hips, a final effect of excruciating tightness. She also wore a necklace and pendant set with turquoise and diamonds, and a large hat of startling eccentricities of brim, skewered to her head by pins set with amethysts and pearls; and she swung from one hand a mesh-bag of gold set with emeralds and rubies. "Gee! You sure are getting one fine shape!" she commented freely, surveying her hostess. And then in a scream of surprise: "Mrs. Loring! Well, what do you know about that?"

"Mis' *Loring*?" echoed the other woman, roused to some show of curiosity. "For God's sake, you don't say!" They both stared.

"I — I'm sure I know you," Eleanor stammered to the fat young woman, much embarrassed. "Only I'm so stupid about names — I can't remember —"

"Don't mention it!" said the other, frigidly formal. But the next instant she burst into a most good-natured laugh. "Say, that sounded awfully funny, didn't it, me telling you not to mention it, that way? I didn't mean for you not to mention my name, you

know — I wasn't thinking how it would sound. I don't believe you ever heard my name anyhow. I seen you lots of times down to Fritsch's, Mrs. Loring. I'm the one they call Miss Lutie, don't you know? Miss Lutie."

"Oh! Oh, yes, of *course!* I *knew* your face —"

"That's just my given name, you know. My last name's Morehead," said Lutie, suddenly embarrassed in her turn; her face took on an even deeper red as she glanced around the room and back to Eleanor. "Morehead. *You* know, I guess."

"Oh, you mean Mrs. Maranda's —? Yes? No, I didn't know! Why, isn't that nice? Isn't it interesting for us to meet this way?" said Eleanor, in a voice of convincing friendliness. It was real; her humane vision gave her some glimpse of what might be going through poor Lutie's mind, and to set her at her ease, to be kind, to help without offence, Eleanor called upon every resource of a gentlewoman. She spoke to the other. "Why, then, you must be her brother's wife? I noticed the name, but I didn't think about it's being the same family. There might be ever so many Moreheads, not related at all, you know."

"Uh-huh," said Tom's wife, sullenly. The revelation seemed to have awakened a kind of dull hostility within her. Eleanor recollected that Tom Morehead had once been employed at Mr. Loring's Elmwood factory — might be still, for all she knew. There was a pause.

"Say, Lina, looks like you done a lot of housecleaning round here lately — nit!" Lutie said at length with forced jocularity.

"My God, Lute Morehead, if you felt like I do —

Say, it's a pity about you anyhow, ain't it? Your being so smart, ain't it?" retorted the other savagely. "If you ever get a chance to get married, you'd better do better'n what I did, or you'll find out what it's like. Working and slaving yourself to death on fifteen dollars a week, and being sick all the time like this," she wound up with a vengeful eye on Eleanor.

Lutie opened her mouth for what would probably have been a stinging repartee, but controlled herself, likewise mindful of the outsider; and Eleanor intervened in something of a panic. "Don't worry about your house—you have enough to worry you without *that*," she said, wondering whether she was striking the right note, or making matters worse. "Everything's going to come around all right, and if you let yourself worry, it might be bad for the baby, you know. The clothes will come in a few days, and the Society takes charge of the nurse and the doctor, and the things you may need from the drug-store. So you must let all that go off your mind completely." Eleanor rose. "And—and I hope you will let me come and see you again?" she said earnestly.

Mrs. Morehead did not answer. After an instant Lutie got up too, and said with a careful affectation of what she would doubtless have called the "society manner": "Oh, that's so sweet of you, Mrs. Loring. Of course, we'd *love* to have you. Must you go? *Let me walk along with you?*"

"Well, I like your nerve! You just don't go one step out of here till you hand over my lahvaleer, Miss Lutie!" her sister-in-law interrupted, lumbering up out of her chair with unexpected activity. "I like your nerve borrowing off of me, and going round all diked out as if it was your own! I give six dollars

for that lahvaleer, and it ain't for *you* to go round all diked out in, and lose it, like as not, or get it busted somehow — You give it here! You give it right here this minute!" she screeched out in a sudden fury, moving on the other with menacing hands.

"Ain't I? Ain't I just as fast as I can? My God, what do you take me for? Think I want to swipe your old lahvaleer? I come round here to-day, just to give it back to you. Ain't I doing it as fast as I can?" screamed out Lutie, her face flaming as she struggled with the fastening of the pendant; she wrenched it loose finally, and flung the thing at its owner. "There! There's your old lahvaleer! S'pose *I* want it? I'll let you know if you think you can call me a thief, you — !" Eleanor heard a lively interchange of epithets, as she retreated hastily down the stairs.

She was not alarmed for the bodily safety of either woman, shrewdly calculating that this little family disagreement would wear itself out in squalling and foul words. Young Mrs. Loring had profited, too, by her experience at this kind of charity work, brief as it was; and about this last encounter there was to her something as grotesque as it was terrible. For it *was* terrible, Eleanor repeated to herself as she walked on, it *was* terrible for people to try to live and bring up children on fifteen dollars a week. Fifteen dollars! The hat she was wearing cost that much! The feeling that something was wrong, monstrously wrong somewhere, came back upon her generous spirit in full force. When an inconvenient sense of humour suggested that the purchase of pinchbeck jewellery scarcely helped to solve the Morehead problems in domestic economy, and that certain aspects of their

ménage could be improved at no cost except that of a bar of soap and a little good-will, Eleanor silenced it with her retort: What do you expect? Can you blame that poor young woman for liking pretty things? It may be silly, but it is much more pitiful. Do you look for her to have your tastes and your standards? She does not know how to be clean, to be frugal, to be thrifty. Who has ever taken the least interest in her, or tried to teach her? Not *you*, at any rate. Yet is it not somebody's duty? And why not yours, Eleanor Loring?

At the corner she was overtaken by the fat girl, walking with tempestuous hurry, still simmering from the conflict; she shied off in miserable awkwardness, catching Eleanor's eye, and would have gone charging by her, but Eleanor made haste to speak.

"Oh, you go my way. Do you live near here?" she said, invitingly shortening her own step. Lutie hesitated, red-faced, then fell in beside her. "Yeah. Right up here on Poplar."

Eleanor took counsel with herself and framed another remark. "It's so odd I never knew who you were, though I've seen you so often at Mr. Fritsch's. You've been with him a good while, haven't you?"

"Eight years," said Lutie shortly.

"So long as that? It must be a nice place, then. Do you like it?"

"I guess it's as good as any. Don't make much difference. All of us girls has to work *somewhere*, Mrs. Loring," said Lutie with bitterness.

"It *is* hard," said Eleanor, answering the feeling in the other's voice with so much honest sympathy in her own that Lutie warmed to her from that moment. "I don't suppose ordinary work really *hurts*

anybody," said Eleanor; "but it's hard for a girl just the same. How many of you are there?"

"Well, there's Ella and Carrie besides me. There's my brothers too, of course; I've got three brothers living still — two of the boys died, you know." Lutie hesitated again, then said bluntly: "Mrs. Loring, who told you about Lina, Tom's wife, you know? Who was it told you and those other ladies about her?"

"It was a Miss Penry. She goes around, and whenever she finds people that are — that she thinks are — that seem to need a little help —"

"Oh, *that* old thing! I know *her*!" said Lutie. "It's a lot her business, ain't it? Well, I don't mean she ain't nice," she interpolated apologetically. "But she — oh, *you* know what I mean. We had her to board with us one winter when she was district-visiting around that way she does — just plain rubbering, that's what *I* call it. It's the way she does it, *you're* not a *bit* that way!" Lutie affirmed enthusiastically. And hereupon she all at once became voluble, eagerly confiding, opening her mind with an abandon which would have astonished Eleanor if she had not met with it before among Lutie's kind; she thought the readiness with which they poured out all their simple opinions, beliefs and experiences upon the slightest show of interest was very touching. "I wouldn't want Miss Penry coming around *me* — not that she ain't a lady and nice and wants to do for you, but she just don't *appeal* to me — *you* know what I mean —" She squeezed Eleanor's arm. "Lina don't mind what *anybody* does for her, though; she'd just as leave! Lina's not refined — of course you know that, Mrs. Loring. Her folks are just as dago as can be — her

old father and mother, I mean — right straight from the old country. They ain't like Americans, you know; they'd take anything anybody'd do for 'em. Tom *would* marry her — you can't stop a man — and she was crazy after him, never let him alone a minute. You wouldn't believe the things that girl done to get him!" Lutie dilated at some length upon what was evidently considered a *mésalliance* in the Morehead family. "Well, I s'pose it's a good thing *somebody's* looking out for her. She can't look out for herself," she ended. "If we ain't home a'ready!"

Eleanor looked up at the row of windows and dingy lace curtains across the narrow brick front with the western sun blazing against it; there was a sign "Furnished Room" in one of them with a forlorn plant dying in a gaudy little jardinière on the sill. She looked at the dusty, dirty, stone steps, at the dusty, dirty walk along one side with sodden rags thrown down, and old newspapers flapping here and there, and a broken chair tilted against the wall in the cool dark cañon between it and the next building. Eleanor looked without flinching. If she saw there an opportunity for doing a great and much-needed service, she saw also certain freedom, a release from her dissatisfaction; and with all her fine, hot impulses, she had too plentiful an endowment of ironic penetration and common-sense not to read her own motives. She was no heroine in her own eyes; merely a discontented woman, trying to forget herself and to be of some use.

"'Furnished Room,'" she read. "That's where you had Miss Penry, I suppose. How would you like to have another lodger? Would you have *me*, for instance?"

PART THREE

BREAD AND CIRCUSES

CHAPTER I

SOCIETY heard without any great commotion that the Amzi Loring had finally agreed — for the first time since their marriage, it was suggested! — upon one point, namely: that it was hopeless for them to try to live together any longer. For once, there was nothing in the newspapers; indeed nothing happened of a sensational enough nature to be worthy of print. The separation was conducted, people said, with the utmost reserve and dignity — trust Nellie Maranda for that! But for that matter, the Loring men themselves were equally averse to publicity; and he would have been a plucky journalist who approached Amzi Two on the subject. Loring senior, going east on one of his business tours shortly afterwards, called on Mr. Marshall Cook at his rooms at the Oasis Club to explain exactly how things stood — not that he felt that his son needed defence or justification, as he was very careful to make clear.

“They couldn’t make a go of it, so they’ve decided to stop trying,” said he. “I don’t know that it was the fault of either one of ’em — they simply couldn’t make a go of it. Amzi’s my son, but I don’t want to take sides. I don’t claim that he is altogether blameless, but I guess you know as well as I do that he’s never ill-treated her, or run around with other women. Amzi is too much of a man for that kind of low-down business —” he eyed Cook challengingly; and then rather spoiled the effect of this expression of confi-

dence by adding: "Anyhow, a man's got to live pretty straight and take care of himself, if he expects to stick in organised athletics."

"Oh, I know that, Mr. Loring," Cook assented cordially. "I'm sure of that. No one that knew him would believe any charge of that kind. Besides," he went on with a half smile; "if he ever had misbehaved that way, the chances are that Eleanor would have stuck to him through thick and thin! She's a proud woman, and you know the pride of women is a very queer thing."

Mr. Loring looked as if he did not quite grasp this subtlety, but let it pass as of no particular importance. "Well, neither one of them can complain of the other's having done anything absolutely *wrong*, that's what ought to be distinctly understood. I consider that I'm in a position to say, as I've lived in the same house with them all this time — going on six years. Personally, I regret this very much, Mr. Cook, I like your niece; we've never had a word. I'm sorry this had to happen; but I don't see any other end to it. They couldn't grind along that way forever. In their place I would get a divorce and be done with it; things of that nature ought to be settled once for all; at least that would be my idea. It could have been done quietly without any talk; it's done every day. However, they both seemed to be in favour of just separating. I don't know what their idea is, but it looks to me as if they both hated like poison to own up publicly that they've made such a fizzle of it!" Here he and the author exchanging a glance, both men grinned openly. "You can't account for the things people do," said Amzi One, wagging sagaciously. "In the first place, they run off to get married, which

they didn't need to do the least in the world. Nobody was hindering them. And now when you'd think they'd be good and tired of it, and would jump at the chance to be free from each other, why, they haw and gee, and can't make up their minds! However, I haven't attempted to argue with them. Best to keep out of it."

"If they'd had children, it might have been different."

"Yes. But that's not a thing that a person can talk to them about. Well!" He got up. "I'm very glad to have had this little talk with you, Mr. Cook. I was pretty sure you would feel about it the same as I do; that is, that they have to be let alone. Don't make any difference what mistakes we see young people making, it's no good our trying to steer 'em. I just didn't want you to get a wrong impression, and think I was indifferent. It seems Eleanor's got a great notion of supporting herself by doing some kind of uplift work in the slums. I suppose you know about that?"

Cook nodded. "Yes, she wrote me. She's always had a turn for it—always wanted to do something of the kind."

"Yes. Well. They pay her something, I understand. Well, she'll probably get along all right. She's very fiery and enthusiastic about helping those people; I guess she'll get some of that knocked out of her, but she'll probably get along all right," said Mr. Loring with his habitual detachment.

Mrs. Andrew J. Grace was president of the Maternity Society that winter; at seventy years of age she was still very active and useful in charitable work. And she presently informed her granddaughter that

Mrs. Loring was one of the most efficient aides they had. "She always has her reports gotten up very concisely for the monthly meetings — of course any one can do it, it's just filling out cards and answering inquiries, but hers give one a feeling of being so thorough and reliable somehow; and her comments are always so good. She seems to take so much personal interest, and that's what those poor creatures need most, I've no doubt. The way she does it and the things she says sometimes remind me a good deal of Mr. Cook — the same kind of humour and sympathy, you know, Bessie. We never had anybody that could do it so well before — not even Lorrie Gilbert. I only hope Mrs. Loring won't wear herself out at it, that's all; a great deal of it can't help but be very sordid and tiresome. It's so strange that she can do it so well, when it takes all sorts of tact and patience, and they say she couldn't get along with her husband at all; they say they had a horrible time."

"All the girls say that she has a very high temper. She looks as if she might have, somehow. Those formidable straight black eyebrows! Maybe the slum ladies don't mind it; or maybe if she'd married a one-eyed bricklayer with tuberculosis she'd have been a perfect angel to him," Bessie suggested.

"He wouldn't have been much more impossible than this Loring man, I daresay. Mercy, will you *ever* forget the time Mr. Cook came and told us about the wedding! Has he said anything to you about this last development?"

"No — not very much, that is. He's mentioned it, but that's all."

"Why, I thought he told you everything!" exclaimed Mrs. Grace unguardedly. The next moment

she felt, as she phrased it in her vexation, as if she could have bitten her tongue out! "I must be getting childish!" she said to herself wrathfully. To be sure, Bessie's expression did not change; but her small, immobile features, like Mrs. Grace's own, never displayed much expression, whatever she felt or thought. She picked up a fine little trifle of ivory carving off of her desk, and turned it about contemplatively, as she answered.

"Oh, ordinary gossip, yes. He talks to me quite freely in that way at times. But naturally not about his own family so much. He's very fond of this niece anyway; *he* never will allow that she is high-tempered. It's always Nellie is so 'spirited' with him." Bessie put the ornament down, and smiled at her grandmother, with impervious blue eyes.

"Well, when you write to him, tell him what a success she is making of this work. He'll be pleased."

"Why don't you write and tell him yourself? I haven't anything particular to write about just now," said Miss Grace nonchalantly. And though the fat envelope lying on the desk under her hand had arrived from Marshall that Saturday morning, though Bessie would reply to it without fail the following Saturday, Mrs. Grace, who knew all this, felt somehow as if she had made another mistake.

Not long afterwards, the two ladies, going through their calling-list, came to Mrs. Maranda. Once a year their handsome limousine took them around to "everybody" in succession, Mrs. Grace preserving the punctilious habits of her youth; so, in due course, it deposited them at the Church Street house. And there was Mrs. Maranda, graciously limp in her invalid's chair, excusing herself from rising as she re-

ceived them; and Fannie, sitting with her back to the light, rather quiet and silent, with her hands clasped rigidly in her lap; and there, too, as it happened, was Nellie Loring herself. It was known that she had scarcely any time to spare for visiting even her own people nowadays. But there she was, tall and slim, indomitably and indefinably elegant as ever, looking as if she had never been near a slum in her life, Bessie told her uncle afterwards. "I am sure Mrs. Loring is just such another as the old-fashioned heroines of novels who could wear one dress through three volumes and all kinds of strenuous adventures, and look absolutely fresh and beautiful and dainty up to the very end!" she wrote, to Cook's amusement. "But your niece is a much more *flavoursome* person than any of the Amelias and Amandas could have been. It was an interesting call." Cook read that with another laugh. He guessed that the Grace ladies had embarrassed themselves by efforts to keep away from such subjects as divorce; and perhaps Eleanor had had a tilt with Mrs. Juliet. No doubt it had been an interesting call!

Miss Grace, indeed, did feel a slight awkwardness at first, thinking of the separation, and — in spite of her denials — of certain confidential statements from Mr. Cook which, very likely, he had no business to make. "I don't think I ever saw you before without some of that exquisite fancy-work you're always doing," she said to Fannie, by way of making talk.

"I — I'm not working on anything just now," said Fannie, loosening her hands and then clasping them together more tightly, with a nervous movement.

"Poor Fan's eyes have given out completely. Isn't it a pity?" Mrs. Maranda explained.

Fannie herself said nothing; she seemed somehow to shrink together as the others, a little startled, began to murmur inarticulate sympathy, but Eleanor spoke quickly.

"Oh, not *completely*, Aunt Juliet! That's just a phrase — a — a way of talking," she said, and reached out and took one of her sister's idle hands in hers, holding it firmly. "Fannie's just gone and over-worked, and her eyes have to have a rest, that's all. They're going to be all right in a little while."

"Eleanor thinks it's proper to talk in that encouraging way, but *I* believe in facing the worst. It takes more moral courage, but you can make up your mind to *anything* if you try — if you only exert your will-power," said Mrs. Maranda with splendid resolution. "Dear me, with my ill-health, I've had so much of that to do! I tell Fannie there's nothing gained by deluding yourself with false hopes. She ought to look at her trouble squarely without shrinking. Don't you think I'm right, Mrs. Grace? Don't you think that's the best way?"

"A — er — perhaps so," said the old lady, turning her round, bright, black eyes like a pair of jet cabochons to Fannie's shadowed face. "But I don't believe there's any real trouble for you to look at, my dear. I used to do a great deal of that dreadfully trying fine work when I was your age, but I had to stop it, too. It's a passing thing, of course; it just teaches one to be careful."

Mrs. Maranda smiled tolerantly and shook her head. "That's very good advice, but poor Fan is past the stage when being careful would do her any good. Doctor Saunders says he *hopes* that she will never go *entirely* blind, but will always be able to see

to take care of herself and to get around the house. He *hopes* so. I tell Fannie that it's her duty to prepare herself for — for that sort of a future, and to make the best of it. Fannie always has been more or less active, but now if she has to be useless, why, she has to be useless, that's all. Poor Fan! Of course it will be hard."

"It would be very hard for Mrs. Maranda especially," said Eleanor, smiling brightly and ingenuously around the circle. "She might have to hire a sewing-girl to do all her work for her, and I don't think any of them can sew as well as my sister."

"*Don't*, Nell!" Fannie said in a low voice.

"Fannie *loves* so to sew and embroider, it's been *impossible* for me to stop her," said Mrs. Maranda after a pause.

"With all Aunt Juliet's *wonderful* will-power, too!" Nellie pointed out admiringly to the others; her tone was sincerity itself.

"Do you know, Mrs. Loring, you remind me very much of Mr. Cook, sometimes," said Miss Grace, somewhat abruptly and irrelevantly.

"*Do* I?" said Eleanor, colouring, well pleased. "I like to be told that!" Suddenly she seemed to the other a different woman, candid and warmly charming. The impression flashed and vanished, yet was registered on Bessie's mind, as if with the snapping of some inward camera, she fancied; she wondered what it was that she had seen, and in what the likeness to Cook had consisted. For now Mrs. Loring was again only a very handsome woman with a kind of crystalline hardness about her; and how Marshall would have laughed at the suggestion of his being either hard or handsome!

"My grandmother is enthusiastic about the way you manage the Maternity Society cases," she said. "They've had ever so many helpers, but no one half so good as you, she says."

"I'm *interested* in the work, you know."

"You must be to go and live—" Bessie began. Then: "Good gracious! What am I saying!" she thought, checking herself, panic-struck.

"Yes. I have a room down on Poplar Street," said Eleanor calmly. "It's convenient to my district."

"You know, of course, Mrs. Grace, that Eleanor doesn't *have* to do it," Mrs. Maranda interposed. "I want her to feel that her home is here with me just as it always was before—er—*before*, you know. My husband's children are welcome to all I have, just as if they were my own, it doesn't make any difference *what* happens. But she *will* go and live among those dreadful people, as if her necessities drove her to it. I was saying to her just as you came in that I should think she would want to have herself sterilised or sprinkled with formaldehyde or something before she goes to anybody's house—any decent person's, I mean. She doesn't know what kind of infection she may be distributing around!"

"Well, you know having babies isn't at all infectious," Mrs. Grace objected with amusement; "if Mrs. Loring isn't exposed to anything but *that*—(*Horrors! What will that sound like to her?*)—Have you got a nice place to board, Mrs. Loring?" she asked precipitately.

"Oh, yes, good enough. It's with some people named Morehead," said Eleanor. "They try to be nice to me. Respectable people, you know, although

Mr. Morehead gets drunk once in a while. They keep him out of the way until he's presentable again, and he's not bothered me so far. To be sure I'm not about the house much; I have to be out making visits almost all day."

"Morehead? Oh, I remember. You had a report some time ago about a Mrs. Morehead. Is that the place where you are?" inquired Mrs. Grace, displaying a most vivacious interest in her relief at getting safely away from what promised to be a ticklish neighbourhood.

"No. It's the same family, though — a married son. No, I'm afraid even *I* couldn't stand living with those people," said Eleanor, with what seemed to Mrs. Maranda a hideous deliberation. What was Eleanor going to say next? What mortifying revelation was she about to make? She kept her step-mother poised in well-nigh unbearable apprehension, and then with tactics truly feline — so it looked to Juliet — deferred the moment! "They will probably have to have more help, Mrs. Grace," she said. "I was going to bring up their case at the next meeting. The man drinks, too, and is out of employment half the time; he hasn't any trade, and can't really do anything except ordinary day labour. And his wife is very shiftless and ignorant. Their baby is about six months old now, a poor, sickly little thing — she doesn't seem capable of learning how to take care of it —" she went on giving Mrs. Grace further details, without even glancing towards the lady of the house, speechless in her chair. The fact was, as Eleanor readily guessed, that both the Grace ladies had forgotten all about Mrs. Maranda's family connections and maiden name, which were not of nearly so much importance to the

community as poor Mrs. Juliet naïvely believed them to be. Her terrors were quite needless, so Eleanor benevolently took care to prolong and aggravate them by those sharp devices of which she was mistress. She had long ago gauged what she chose to consider the small shallows of Mrs. Maranda's spirit, and knew to a nicety how to perplex, to annoy, to frighten or aggrieve her.

Mrs. and Miss Grace took their leave at length, and re-entered their stately vehicle, and continued their round, the elder lady checking off the last name with the remark that she supposed they might never have kept up the Maranda acquaintance at all if it had not been for Mr. Cook. "Knowing him so well, it wouldn't seem quite nice not to pay his people *some* attention — though, by the way, I don't think he cares very much about any of them himself, except Mrs. Loring."

"She is the only *person* in the family, that's evident," said Bessie. "Everybody always says that Mrs. Maranda is a sweet, good woman, and she's done everything for those girls, but somehow I — well, she might be pretty tiresome to live with, I imagine. I thought it was rather tactless and thoughtless the way she talked to that poor thing who may be going blind. Yet she meant well, I'm sure."

"It wasn't tactless and thoughtless, it was downright stupid!" said Mrs. Grace, forcibly. "It made me think of what your grandfather used to say; that one good, kind fool could do more harm and cause more suffering than all the villains in creation!" She smiled at the remembrance, then sighed, and they were silent for a while, gazing out of the carriage

windows but without seeing the landscape, as they thought of the dead man.

“Well,” said Bessie at last. “Our young friend, Mrs. Loring, is no fool — anything but! One can see *that*. And she’s not a villain either, for all those Mephistophelian eyebrows. I don’t know what she is. I can’t quite make her out.”

CHAPTER II

ELEANOR'S room at the Moreheads was furnished with an iron bedstead intricately scrolled and floriated, which she innocently supposed to be enamelled a greyish drab until it emerged from her scrubbing white, as originally, save where the paint had scaled off in patches; the bedding was approximately the same colour before she effected some changes in it also. There was a golden-oak dressing-table with a heart-shaped mirror, a wash-stand, and a little, palsied, tripod-like table of no recognisable wood or other material; to the eye and touch it gave the impression, even after repeated washings, of being cast out of solidifying liquorice. There were besides a Morris chair with the arms sawed in the likeness of a lion's head in profile, and cushions of red velveteen; an iron mantelpiece draped with a strip of pink silk the ends finished with a kind of fringe of little tin crescents alternating with little balls of pink chenille; a dust-hued paper of no perceptible pattern on the walls, nicely harmonising with the carpet on the floor; and a pink stoneware cuspidor, wreathed with roses in bas-relief. There were lace curtains. The back of the fireplace had fallen in, partly dislodging the grate which was sagging sideways, and the rubbish, bricks, soot and old ashes augmented by a stray medicine-bottle, burnt matches, webs of cotton string and wads of paper sprawled over

the iron fender, Mrs. Morehead not having had time yet, as she explained, to straighten or remove it.

This was Mrs. Homer Morehead, who was now fat and middle-aged with a quantity of dead-looking, greyish-yellowish hair that grew in lovely waves and tendrils framing her large, thick-featured face; in youth, it was probably brilliantly blond, and one of her main attractions, though she must have been a very pretty woman. It was natural that years of hard work, small means and the cares of a family should have withered her, although, to tell the truth, Mrs. "Junk," even to Eleanor's inexperienced eyes, had not the appearance of ever having suffered greatly from any of these things — certainly not from work or worry at any rate. And, in fact, she herself, at their first interview, avowed frankly that she was no longer capable of either; she was an invalid, it seemed!

"I can't do much, I'm so kinda weak — I get kinda weak spells with my heart or nerves, I don't know which it is, and then I can't do a living thing," she continued, à propos of the grate, dropping into the Morris chair that cried aloud under her weight; "and I've hardly ever got any help, the girls being out all the time, you know, and they won't hardly lift a hand when they come home anyhow, so it's no wonder things don't get done, if I slave and slave, even. I can't do *everything*. I ain't hardly had the stren'th to get up here since Miss Penry went. Well, this is the room, Mis' Loring. I guess it ain't like what you've had, but poor people can't have things, you know."

"It's very nice, I expect to be perfectly comfortable," said Eleanor heroically. "The landlord ought to fix that grate for you, oughtn't he?"

"Well, I want the parlour papered, and I don't believe he'll do both," said Mrs. Morehead with more animation. "You know how *men* are. If I told him about the grate first, he'd say it ought to be attended to right off, and we could wait for the paper. I just thought I wouldn't tell him for a while — there's the swellest paper with roses and a kinda little gold network running all over, and you cut out the border, I seen on a lady friend of mine's parlour the other day that she just had done. That's the kind I'm going to have. There ain't anything much the matter with that grate really. You could prop it up at this end with a little piece of brickbat and it wouldn't ever show in the world, and I'll bet Homer can put that back where it's fell in, so's it'll *do*. You won't need it so long as the weather keeps hot anyway. Homer's a handy boy at anything like that."

"A boy? Oh, you have a son Homer?"

"Yes. Named after his Pa. I'll have him clean up them ashes and truck for you, Mis' Loring, and anything else you want done," said Mrs. Morehead, looking vaguely around. Then she returned to a minute survey and appraisal of Eleanor's toilette — as it seemed — her gaze moving slowly over it from top to toe. "I guess your bathroom at home's all solid marble, ain't it?" she asked, irrelevantly. "There ain't any water in this house, only on the first floor."

"Oh, that's no matter. I can manage."

"Homer'll carry up for you, if you want. Say, do pardon *me*, Mis' Loring, but that baby-Irish on your waist is the swellest thing I ever saw! It's put in so cute —"

"Isn't that your bell ringing?" interrupted Elea-

nor, the gong at the front door having, in fact, whanged thunderously twice in the last half minute.

"Oh, I guess it's just the mail-man, and nothing but a circular anyway," said Mrs. Morehead, serenely inert in the Morris chair. "Homer'll go; he always does if he's anywheres around. Say, pardon my curiosity, but did you have that waist made or is it a bought model?"

"Neither one. I made it myself, lace and all," said Eleanor; "I'm glad you like it," she added kindly.

"*Made it yourself?* You never —? And the lace, too! Well, what do you *think* of that!"

"Why, it's not at all hard. I'll show you the stitch. You know how to crochet, don't you?"

"Oh, I ain't any time for crochet-work, thanks just the same," said Mrs. Morehead, suddenly losing interest. "It takes all my strength to run this house. Poor people can't do things like that, Mis' Loring. You'll find out."

Some imp spurred Eleanor to suggest that she might instruct the all-efficient Homer in the art of crocheting; *he* could doubtless compass it. But she good-naturedly refrained, asking, instead: "I wonder if I could speak to your little boy now? I'd like to, if it's not too much trouble to get him."

"Oh, my, no! He's somewhere, I expect. You can 'most always get Homer easy enough," Mrs. Morehead assured her; and in point of fact, nothing could have been easier than the method of getting Homer, which she forthwith demonstrated without stirring from the chair. She raised her voice in a prolonged and penetrating cry: "Ho-o-mer! O-o-oh, Ho-o-o-mer!"

The incantation was successful, in that it raised

an answering hoot from the depths of the house: "Wh-at? All ri'!" And directly they heard distant movements, steps, and a door banging.

"Homer's not just what you'd call a *little* boy, though he's small for his age," his mother further expounded indifferently. "He's going on fourteen. He got a kinda set-back when he was real little, so I don't believe he'll ever be like he was full-grown — like a life-size man, you know. Some of them men down to the saloon useta get him in there and give him something to drink — fill him up so's to see him act funny, you know, and I've always thought that's what done it. Set him back that way in his growth, I mean. But he's plenty strong."

Eleanor looked at her tranquil face, listened to her even utterance in a kind of unbelieving yet convinced horror; she saw that the thing was too monstrous not to be true; and every faculty within her blazed up in white-hot anger. "Do you mean to say that you —?" she began; and then, to her credit be it said, Eleanor arrested herself. Of what use was her late-coming denunciation? She would only puzzle and antagonise this dull, gelatinous creature, she would only further becloud that little puddle of a soul; and if she was to help this class of people at all, it was imperative that, first of all, she should gain their confidence, their liking. She amended her question hastily: "Do the men still do that?"

"What? Make him drunk? No, not any more. Homer got on to 'em after a while — when he begun to get older, you know, and then he stopped his own self. He wouldn't let 'em give him no more; he wasn't going to be made fun of. Homer's always been a smart kid."

Here Homer arrived; he came no farther than the threshold whence he threw a glance at Mrs. Morehead, accompanied by an interrogative grunt, and immediately fixed his whole attention on Eleanor, who, for her part, was not less interested. They exchanged a searching stare. It was a relief to find that there was nothing repellently dwarfish about the boy's short, thick figure and disproportionately big, strong-looking hands and feet, though Eleanor found herself silently concurring in his mother's opinion that he would never reach the normal stature of a man. She thought he did not have a bad face; it was like a thousand other faces neither homely nor handsome, and his light grey eyes met her steadily.

"Yeah. Sure. I can fix it," he said when the needs of the fireplace had been pointed out. "Yeah, I can carry the buckets up and down for you — if I don't get no steady job that'll take me away, that is." He appeared to reflect, then announced: "I guess I can do it anyway. You won't want 'em except mornings and evenings, will you?"

"I told you Homer would," said Mrs. Morehead, placidly. "You won't need to keep after him to *make* him, either, Mrs. Loring. Homer's smart."

"It don't take any smartness to carry buckets," said Homer drily. "Say, Maw, Mrs. Sullivan's over to see you. She's downstairs now."

Mrs. Morehead departed with alacrity; she was equally fatigued with her prospective lodger's society, and anxious to flourish her before Mrs. Sullivan. Eleanor and the boy were left still openly examining each other, Eleanor from her chair in the middle of the room, slim, erect and unconsciously brilliant in her plain and immaculate dress with her parasol

across her knees, and Homer planted in the doorway, his hands in the pockets of his shabby old trousers girdled about him with a strap.

"Homer," said Eleanor with gravity. "Your mother didn't say anything about it, but I don't expect you to do these things for me for nothing. That wouldn't be very good business, it seems to me," said Eleanor, quoting Amzi One with relish.

Homer responded with the extremely practical remark that if she hadn't said anything, he would have! "It's five cents a bucket, up or down."

"Five cents up or down. Very good."

There ensued a pause during which Homer appeared to be considering some other proposition, which he finally introduced: "Say —!"

"Yes?" said Eleanor, instantly applying herself to listen in a fashion which seemed somehow to satisfy or reassure the boy; he came a step into the room, and spoke with a certain caution.

"I don't ever give away a business deal. I don't tell nobody how much I'm making, nor nothing else about it, see?" said he, his eyes searching hers with the strangest mixed expression of anxiety, confidence and a silent entreaty that both perplexed and touched her.

"I suppose that is the best way," she said.

"'Tain't sense to let folks know how much you got," Homer insisted.

"No, indeed."

Homer eyed her doubtfully. "I won't put the price up on you, but I won't throw in no extras, neither," he warned.

"To be sure not! A bargain's a bargain."

"All right!" said Homer, suddenly brisk. "Now

you tell me what all you want done, and I'll get busy."

After this fashion began Eleanor's stay on Poplar Street. The young woman entered upon it with something of the spirit of the pioneer settlers in our wildernesses aforetime, to whom the assurance that a thing could not be done was a challenge to do it; and it may be that she also shared a little in their courage, their persistency, their unconscious or voiceless idealism. Add to these a good strong constitution and some sense of humour, both of which she possessed, and it would be hard to find a combination of qualities better fitting one for charity work. To her applauding or concerned friends, Eleanor would reply that of course it was uncomfortable, but of what importance was that? It was interesting. She worked — oh yes. But she had tried being idle, and that was the most tiresome business on earth. She might not make quite the success she had expected, still she did once in a while "get results" which were sufficiently encouraging. And she was continually learning something.

For instance — although in her mingled amusement and discomfiture she confided this to no one except her Uncle Marshall — she discovered that she had rather lost caste, not among her own class, but with those whom she wanted to serve, by coming to dwell among them! Young Mrs. Amzi Loring with her automobiles and toilettes, and her name in the "*Society Jottings*" column of the *Observer* every Sunday was a much more striking and satisfying personage than the same Mrs. Loring removed from her glittering background and accessories, and washing a bedstead in Mrs. Junk Morehead's front room. It

has probably always been at a considerable loss of prestige that the mighty have descended from their seats to hob-nob with the un-mighty. "Of course these people don't want to be patronised, and they are not snobs in our sense of the word, but I actually seem to have made more impression on them when I was more distant, and obviously a great deal better off!" Eleanor reflected. It was as if they had enjoyed pointing out to her and contemplating themselves the contrast between her affluence and their poverty; and obscurely resented the fact that this contrast no longer existed. Instead, as Eleanor demonstrated, the difference nowadays was mainly that between being clean and being dirty, being lazy and being industrious, being thrifty and being improvident; but who wanted to be shown *that*?

Not the Morehead family, at all events. They witnessed their tenant's reforms in her small territory with abundant curiosity and amusement, but — excepting possibly Lutie — without the faintest impulse to emulate them. The younger women envied Eleanor's "style," her hair, her figure, her complexion, while continuing to deck themselves with soiled sham finery, to pile their heads in extravagant copy of the season's most extravagant fashions, to apply rouge and powder in lieu of taking a bath. They marvelled at her deft and quiet movements, at the pleasant intonations of her voice; and went on banging doors, holding squawking conversations between the third floor and the cellar, slamming and shoving the furniture and one another. Mrs. Morehead slopped about the house in apparel of an indescribable age and negligence, sometimes going through perfunctory motions with a broom and duster; more often she sat in the parlour

most of the morning reading a novel or the *Midnight Bell*, and spent the afternoon gossiping on her own front steps or a neighbour's when the weather was warm, huddled by one or other of their respective kitchen stoves when it was cold. Always there was a stack of dishes in a pan of greasy water in the sink, always a chilly, depressing mess of sheets or underwear or weird nameless rags soaking in a tub set on an upturned chair, always a penetrating aroma of food cooking or stale, of musty carpets and of a mysterious something, subtly alcoholic which Eleanor, after much observation, at last identified as Mr. Morehead. "I'm sure from his looks, if you lighted one end of him he'd blaze up like a torch," she wrote her uncle. "He must be fairly steeped in whiskey. The hot days when I first came here, he used to pass dozing in a chair tilted against the wall in the alley-way between the two houses. When the weather changed he took to sleeping indoors on the floor — *any* floor anywhere. I have never seen him do anything else. Owing to this careful avoidance of exertion, and to the alcohol which everybody knows is a sovereign preservative, I have no doubt, though he is a dreary, feeble, long, lean scarecrow with apparently one foot in the grave, he will outlast all the righteous, hard-working teetotallers by half a lifetime! Mr. Kendrick, whom I have got to know quite well, says that 'Junk' is just like certain unsalable stocks, he'll always have a 'nuisance value'!"

Eleanor, in fact, chanced so often in her walks abroad, upon Mr. Kendrick whose interests, it would seem, took him likewise into these humble neighbourhoods, that she arrived not only at knowing him much

better, but at rather welcoming the sight of his stiff, leathery countenance creasing into a smile ("Exactly like an old boot-leg!" she described it) when they encountered. But it was not until coming home one day and finding him at the door that she found out he was the landlord, or, more rigidly speaking, the landlord's agent, the hard-fisted individual who preferred making necessary repairs to laying out money on unnecessary decorations.

"Well, we're even," he said. "I hadn't any idea you were the Moreheads' 'lady-roomer.'" And to Eleanor's surprise, he chuckled heartily; but she herself laughed when he explained that Mrs. Morehead had laid a startling increase in their water-bill at the "lady-roomer's" door. "She says she never saw anybody use so much water. It's a scandal!"

Eleanor told him about the arrangement with Homer junior. "He seems to think it very business-like to keep these financial transactions quiet, but I don't think he'd mind my telling *you*."

Mr. Kendrick's smile vanished. "Why, Mrs. Loring," he said; "don't you know what the boy meant? They'd take his money away from him, if they knew he had any. He wants to keep it for himself. You can't exactly blame him. He earns it."

"Blame him!" cried out Eleanor; "I *don't* blame him! Why, that worthless father of his would drink it all up! Homer himself seems to me a very decent sort of boy; at least he has some sense and some ambition. He told me he was going to buy himself a knitted woollen sweater when he had saved up enough. He said he wanted to be warm *this* winter *anyway*; I daresay the poor boy has never been warm in his

life. No wonder he didn't want me to tell, and I certainly won't! I don't see how *anybody* could blame him."

"He's a minor, you know, so his parents have a right in law to every last cent he makes," Mr. Kendrick rejoined. "However, I'm with you!" he added with his dry smile. "I hope Homer'll hang onto it!"

Eleanor was about to burst out with the opinion that such a law was abominable, when a better illumination revealed to her that it was not abominable, only inevitable, being based like every other law on a profound, however unjustified, distrust of human nature. After all, how many young people voluntarily do their duty? How many people of any age, for that matter? The Morehead young women contributed something, each one of them, to the family funds, but by no means ungrudgingly, as Eleanor knew. On Saturday nights there was always a grand screeching wrangle, every word of which ascended with perfect distinctness to her room; and the last time Lutie had come storming to the door and begged to be let in and had sat on the bed and sobbed and hysterically declared that she wasn't going to stay at home any longer to be treated so! She had set her heart on getting a pair of white canvas shoes—"to w-w-wear to the r-rally," Lutie said between gulps and sniffs—but now they had taken the money "off of her" and she wished she was dead! Eleanor comforted her as well as she could.

"You might wear a pair of mine," she said; and the difference in size rendering this impracticable, suggested that Lutie's old ones could be cleaned up and mended "so as to do for just once more anyway."

"No, they can't! They're all busted out," wailed

the victim of parental tyranny. "I don't *care*! I'll *show* him, the dirty old slob! He can't keep on taking my money off of me!"

"Never mind, just go anyhow. Your feet don't show; nobody ever sees them in a crowd," said Eleanor, employing an argument eminently *ad* Morehead, as she thought; but poor Lutie was not to be beguiled this time.

"Oh, my Lord, Mrs. Loring, you know *you* wouldn't have *your* feet not looking as nice as the rest of you, not for one minute! You wouldn't be caught dead without your feet looking nice. There ain't any use your talking to me that way!" she snapped miserably. "I'll just have to stay home, that's all! And I w-wanted to go — I w-wanted to go-o!"

"Oh, now, don't cry! We'll think up *something*," said Eleanor soothingly as if to a child. Indeed, she was growing accustomed to the intrinsic childishness of the average adult human being, as exhibited by Lutie's class; to her mind it was grotesque, it was wearisome, it was exasperating, but more than anything else, it was pitiful. "Tell me about the rally. What is it like? What do you do?" she asked.

The rally, it seemed, was primarily a sort of political hearth- and heart-warming in the Thirteenth Ward occurring annually, promoted by ex-Councilman John Dalton in chief, with a few subordinate local celebrities. They chartered the steamboat *Queen City of the West* and took the crowd to Lowery's Beach for the whole day; there was a barbecue or fish-fry — "Only, of course it ain't a *real* one like they used to have in old times. Them days they say everybody, the whole push, you know, kids and old people and dogs and cats and everything else kinda sat

around and all ate outa one big dish, or something — I don't know how they done it, but it musta been fierce!" Lutie opined. "Of course they wouldn't have nothing like that nowadays. They get a real swell caterer, and have tables and a regular bar for the men, and everything swell. It's all free, you know. All the attractions at the Beach are open, too; you don't have to pay one cent for the Shoot-the-Chutes, or the Whirlpool, or Going-to-Heaven, or the Panama Canal, or any of 'em. And there's a dancing platform, and two bands so they can change off and rest, without the music stopping. You do have the *swellest* time. And they always have a speech by some real swell speaker — not Dalton, you know, *he* never talks — but some big man like Bryan or Debs or somebody. This year they're going to have Chauncey Devitt —" Her features puckered together as the tears started again. "And now I can't go! I do think it's the *meanest, dirtiest* thing —!"

"Never mind! Don't give it up yet. We'll fix it somehow —"

"Last year him and me come back on the boat together. It was the loveliest moonlight," sighed Lutie. "Well, I ain't going one step without I'm dressed right. I'm not going to have people ashamed of me looking *jay*," she announced with savage determination.

Eleanor had a shrewd guess at who was meant by "people," having been an unwilling eavesdropper at family conferences such as that of this Saturday evening when the name of Chauncey Devitt had been freely mentioned in various delicate, satirical pleasantries addressed to Lutie. Soon after her arrival on Poplar Street, she found that the tidy place across the way

was the home of the elderly Irishman whom she recalled — without, however, being able to picture a single feature of his face — in his attack of illness out at the Elmwood factory, half a dozen years ago. Eleanor felt as if it were half a dozen centuries! A deal of water had gone under the bridges since that day. The son and some other man had come out to the house to thank her, she remembered. She did not take much interest in the Devitts, one glance at their home being enough to assure her that her services would never be needed *there*. Moreover, Mrs. Devitt was very “stuck-up” and “kept herself to herself” in a way that Eleanor gathered was more or less offensive to Mrs. Morehead and her circle. Sometimes Eleanor saw her, a little, wiry black-haired Irishwoman, looking seventy, and probably not over fifty-five, moving about her domain on errands of cleanliness with her head done up in a radiantly white towel, or going to Mass of a Sunday morning with a black silk dress and a nice braided cloth cape, and a stout umbrella and her fine gold watch and chain that Mike gave her on their twenty-first wedding anniversary. Of the men of the family it was reported that the son, the well-known labour “agitator,” was seldom at home, and the father got up and was off to work so early in the mornings — even at his age — and returned so late in the evenings that there was not much time left him for neighbourliness; but nobody had any fault to find with Mike Devitt on that score or any other. He, at least, among the Devitts, was unanimously liked; and they were sorry to see that the old man had failed some here lately, the gossips told Eleanor, wagging their heads; he looked broken; one or two hard years since nineteen-seven had been

almost too much for Mike; he had trouble sometimes with his men, and he wasn't as well able to handle them in a strike or any such situation as he had been when younger.

Eleanor listened inattentively; she heard so much talk — rumours, scandal, “secrets” by the ream, by the column, by the square yard! But one day, coming home, she was halted on the crossing by a spreading lake from some burst water-main, and as she stood poised on a paving block, with her skirts drawn into one hand, casting about for the best place to plant her next step, she found herself in company with a slender young man, who, catching her eye, took off his hat with a free and sweeping gesture.

“Mrs. Loring,” said he in an uncommon voice, deep, mellow and ringing. He had black eyes, fine, strong features, a very nobly shaped head with thick, waving black hair swept back from the forehead in the fashion to be seen in portraits of our elder statesmen. Otherwise his toilette was that of any well-dressed man to-day, in a quiet taste; nevertheless he looked like Hamlet, he looked like Romeo!

Eleanor saw all this — she could not help seeing, nobody could have helped seeing — in the moment that she faced him, ransacking her memory, unable to name him, and a little embarrassed, though nowadays many people whom she did not recognise knew and spoke to her; but surely a presence so striking, so full of significance and force as this, she ought to be able to place, she thought with mortification, and coloured under his unwavering gaze, and stammered some sort of greeting. “I was just wondering how to get through this pond without wading,” she said inanely.

“Permit me!” said the stranger. For a startled instant, Eleanor thought that he was going to take off his coat and spread it down for her to tread on — another Releigh! It would not have been at all out of keeping with his unconsciously picturesque figure and movements. But he merely offered his hand with a sober courtesy; and, thus upheld, a hop, step and jump landed her, dry-footed and laughing, on the sidewalk.

“Thank you so much!”

Their eyes met, and Eleanor coloured again. The young man gave her another long, unfathomable look, and bowed and walked off; and presently afterwards, Eleanor from her window, saw him entering with his own latch-key, apparently, the house across the street.

“Why, *that* is who he is! The son, *the* Devitt!” she exclaimed inwardly. “He knew me!” She went and looked at herself in the glass.

CHAPTER III

ALL this while, as Eleanor wrote her uncle, her acquaintance on Poplar Street and in the neighbourhood had been widening from day to day — she hoped her capacity for being useful or for exerting some sort of good influence had kept pace. It was uphill work, though; much more uphill, she naïvely confessed, than she had expected; she had been struck, time and again, with the singular instability of these people; you could never be sure of having definitely accomplished anything with them! “Not that I try to ‘Christianise’ any of them,” she told him. “Fancy me leading ‘Junk’ (for instance) into the Episcopal Church fold! I’m not good enough myself, and I don’t know enough. Besides, I am inclined to follow the advice of one of the Salvation Army women I keep meeting wherever I go: ‘Say, girlie, don’t you ever say I told you, but you want to cut out the come-to-Jesus-dear-sister stuff, and get ’em to scrub the floor and cook up some kind of decent eats for the man and the kids. If they would, it would help to stop the drunkenness and truancy quicker’n all the Gospel you can preach from now till Christmas!’ There are moments, however, when neither method seems to me conspicuously successful. These Morehead people where I live are, I am afraid, too settled in their habits ever to learn anything different — except perhaps Homer. Mrs. Tom Morehead sometimes shows a flash of energy; she seems really fond

of her baby, worrying over it fiercely like a cat; and, also like a cat, without being capable of learning anything beyond the merest elementary principles about taking care of it. Her husband is hopeless, another edition of Morehead *père*, not vicious or brutal, just a weak, dull creature. He used to work for Mr. Loring once as an ice-puller — don't you remember? — but lost that job long ago as he always has every job, through drink or sheer laziness. This spring when he got out of work, I went to Mr. Loring and got him to take Tom back for another try; and he has actually stayed there and kept straight since then, owing to constant vigilance and 'going after' on my part. I haven't any illusions about the reform being permanent. It seems as if you couldn't put character and morals into people like that; you yourself have to be character and morals for them. . . . We have a celebrity 'in our midst,' Mr. T. C. Devitt, the labour leader; his family live across the street, and of course everybody around here knows him. They all talk a good deal about 'Tim' or 'Chaunce,' some of them rather slightly, by the way of 'showing off' how familiar they are with him, I suspect; as usual, he is not unanimously honoured in his own land. He looks very earnest and interesting, an out-of-the-ordinary type; I should like to meet him and hear him talk about those things that we all ought to know more about — I mean unions and wages and employers and employed, and the unemployed, too, poor things. They say he speaks very powerfully and convincingly — on the workingman's side, of course; he comes from that class — makes no bones about saying so — and that must help him to understand their point of view, and to study industrial conditions much more closely

and sympathetically than any 'rank outsider' like me, for instance. I want so to help and I am so horribly hampered merely by being who I am. But the more I see of this pathetic ignorance and suffering and the hideous inequality and unfairness of circumstances, the more I feel that *something* ought to be done. . . ."

Cook smiled and shook his head over that last sentence. "'*Something* ought to be done!' That's characteristic of all these warm-hearted humanitarians. Nellie finds out suddenly that everything is not apparently all for the best in this best of all possible worlds, and immediately she begins that age-old, touching, impotent outcry that something ought to be done. What 'something' could be done that would transform Tom Morehead into an upright, industrious citizen? Eleanor knows too much to expect any such miracle; but she doesn't realise that for all this suffering and inequality that distress her so to be abolished at a blow by 'somebody' doing 'something' would be just as miraculous. She doesn't realise that she herself and her fellow-workers are already doing the most practical 'something' that can be done. And Devitt! Why, I remember that young fellow; I remember thinking he gave promise," said Mr. Cook, somewhat complacently. "It will be interesting to hear what Nellie gets out of him." But oddly enough, aside from a passing notice that they had met, in all her letters, Eleanor did not mention the labour leader again.

As it happened their formal meeting did not take place very soon, notwithstanding the intimate nature of Poplar Street society. From her window Eleanor saw Mr. Devitt almost every day going down to his

office — it was the office of the Federation of Teamsters, Lutie told her — like any other man, yet most unlike all other men in the unaffected grace of his bearing, crowned with a common soft hat and carrying a cane or even a prosaic umbrella in a manner to recall irresistibly the plumes and rapier of romance. He had a habit — or presently developed it — of pausing on the step and allowing his gaze to stray over the façade of the house opposite in an absently speculative style, lingering longest on the two windows — with clean white curtains neatly parted and tied back, and rows of geraniums flourishing vividly in trim little pots aligned on the sills — which belonged to the lodger's room. Indeed, they differed sufficiently from the other windows to arrest anybody's attention, even a man's, as Eleanor reminded herself with a laugh; nevertheless she drew back with cheeks suddenly hot on meeting his eyes full one morning. "What made me do that? How perfectly silly!" she thought the next second, annoyed at herself; and went boldly to the window again, and threw it open, and leaned out over the flowers with her little watering-can in hand. Mr. Devitt was still there; he took off his hat with his unconsciously fine gesture, and Eleanor pleasantly recognised the salute as she would have anybody's; and there this unimportant incident ended.

However, it occurred again; and now and then, as was most natural, they came face to face on the street. Once, Mr. Devitt was in company with a big, round-shouldered, elderly man in well-worn clothing with a soiled collar and tie beneath which one caught a glimpse of a blue cotton shirt like a day-labourer's; Eleanor did not recollect his rough, weather-beaten face, but she divined him to be the father. And once

the celebrity had for companion a totally different person — different from himself and different from Devitt the elder — heavy-set and flashy with a great deal of cigar and watch-chain, and great hairy hands and a certain kind of glance which the young woman, who was by no means slow of observation, had by this time learned to interpret pretty accurately. Chauncey gave her his customary long, slow look about which, in distinction to Mr. John Dalton's, there was not the least offence, but Eleanor hurried past this time with the scantest acknowledgment. Inwardly she recoiled from the sight of him in such an association, until with a certain relief it occurred to her that after all a man in his position must know and suffer everybody, good, bad, indifferent; it was unavoidable in the work of reform and regeneration to which he had dedicated himself. On another occasion Mr. Devitt was carefully convoying his mother along; she saw him speak to the little old woman who thereupon addressed to her a nervous smile and a bob of the head and whole body which was almost a curtsy. Eleanor had an impulse to stop and speak, but some stronger feeling, she did not know what, withheld her. Simultaneously she began to think that this was becoming ridiculous — this solemn mute bowing and eyeing of each other at successive encounters! They could not keep that up forever, yet they must inevitably keep on meeting. In common civility, in common sense, one or other of them ought to break the ice, make some advance, it need not be farther than a remark about the weather; but somehow she could not make up her mind to it, and neither, apparently, could Mr. Devitt.

In the meanwhile, as she told her uncle, she heard

talk enough about the hero, and to spare. Lutie filled her ears with confidences, to Eleanor's growing irritation. The girl's eternal "I says" and "he says," her open infatuation seemed somehow to vulgarise him, though Eleanor privately refused to believe a word of the stuff. It was impossible, in her judgment, for such a man either to have ever been in love with such a girl as Lutie or to have kept up the shabby flirtation all these years. She thought it not unlikely that a good many other women had run after him, having witnessed performances of that nature even among women of her own class who, if they had no more sense than Lutie, were at least supposed to have been trained to a better control of their instincts. All sisters under the skin! And men being likewise all brothers, Mr. Devitt could not be blamed if he had met some of them half-way; he was only human and masculine. So Eleanor decided with the wisdom of her sex. But in Lutie's case, it must have been all on the girl's side, she concluded in impatient pity. It was true that Mrs. Tom Morehead, gossiping about him in a strain of exaggerated intimacy, declared that Chaunce Devitt had at one time "acted like he was dead stuck on Lute," but she guessed he'd got over it, or never meant anything — any *good* — he took such good care to keep out of her road now, and it was sickening to see how she went on about him — and so forth and so on, all of which Eleanor took with a whole handful of salt, let alone a grain! Lutie and Mrs. Tom were at daggers drawn just then. Young Homer expressed a contrary opinion.

"Aw, he wasn't ever stuck on Lutie, nor any other girl. He's stuck on himself, that's who he's stuck on!" said Homer coldly.

"You don't like Mr. Devitt?" Eleanor said.

Homer eyed her. "Well — now — he ain't ever done nothing to *me*," he rejoined, diplomatically evading the main point; much experience had showed Homer the wisdom of the middle-of-the-road course. Still, his attitude was not explicitly approving; nor, to the discerning eye, was that of Mr. Kendrick, though he too maintained a strict regard for neutrality.

"Devitt? Oh, you mean T. Chauncey? Is he at home? Yes, that's so, I remember now, he's advertised to make an address at Jack Dalton's picnic. The authorities must be breathing a good deal easier since they heard what he was here for," was Mr. Kendrick's somewhat obscure conclusion.

"The *authorities*? Why?"

"Well, you know, Dalton is generally supposed to be one of the head men in stirring up these troubles between the union workmen and the contractors or the big concerns that employ them, only his name doesn't often appear. He always gets somebody like Devitt to do the heavy talking; T. Chauncey's a spell-binder, you know — silver-tongued orator," said Mr. Kendrick with an impartial air. "So wherever Devitt goes in connection with Dalton, it's like a storm signal. But if he's just here to speak at this Thirteenth Ward rally, it looks as if they didn't mean to start anything this time."

"You don't care anything about things like that. You're not interested in labour questions," said Eleanor. Mr. Kendrick glanced at her ardent, accusing face, and said no, he didn't believe he was; he'd always been pretty busy.

Eleanor meant to go to the rally, in the spirit of ad-

venture, she told herself, and also, as she would have freely admitted, because she wanted to hear Mr. Devitt; she wanted to be informed, to broaden her outlook, at the same time that she was trying to get nearer to these people. This last result was being rapidly accomplished; not only had Poplar Street taken her into its confidence, but her acquaintance extended farther, even to the very confines of the Ward, as she discovered one day, on being halted and warmly addressed as she was passing Schlochtermailer's by some one issuing therefrom with a brown paper parcel smelling of fish.

"Mrs. Loring! Well, my goodness!" exclaimed the stranger, figuratively — in fact, all but literally — nailing her in front of the decorated hams, the dishpans full of sauerkraut, and the naked poultry with which Schlochtermailer tantalised the public from his show-window. "I *heard* you was living down here. It's funny we ain't ever run into each other before this, ain't it? Only I'm not over this way so often — just to see Heinie once in a while." She jerked her head (which was marvellously coiffed with little tight, light yellow puffs and frizzes) sideways towards the butcher's shop. "Heinie Schlochtermailer, I mean — of course I call him Heinie, as long as he's my brother, you know. Oh, *didn't* you know? Why, *sure*, yes, Heinie's my brother! Well, the idea, your not knowing *that*! Come to think of it though, there wouldn't be any way for you *to* know, except the name, and we might not be the only Schlochtermailer family on top of the ground anyway. But we're the only ones around here, I guess."

"Why no, I didn't know, Miss Hilda," said Eleanor, devoutly thankful that the other had identified her-

self. Now, though she had visited Mr. Loring's Elmwood factory only two or three times, she recognised the bookkeeper with her flaxen fuzz, her spectacles, her little, clean, dried-out face and figure. "I didn't know Mr. Schlochtermaier had a sister."

"Oh my, yes! I seen you didn't. You looked so s'prised."

"Elmwood is a good way from here, and somehow I never connected you with this part of the city."

"Sure, you wouldn't!" agreed the other, beaming on her admiringly. "You wouldn't be likely to hear anybody talking about *me* much, and of course I hear about *you* lots! *Everybody* talks about *you* — that is — I — well, I don't mean — I mean I mean — uh — er —" and here poor Miss Schlochtermaier babbled off in red-faced confusion, "mad enough to bite her tongue out," so she afterwards stated, for having allowed it to run into that awful, ambiguous speech.

"You don't tell me you've always lived here? Before I came? And all this time since?" said Eleanor quickly in a humane anxiety to help her cover up the blunder. "But not with your brother surely, or I couldn't have *helped* knowing."

"No, I — he — well, when Heinie he got married — but I wasn't at home for a good while before that anyhow, on account of it being so far to get up every morning and go way out to Elmwood — I'm over on Fifteenth now," Miss Schlochtermaier stammered unintelligibly. But in another second or two she recovered, and was soon talking copiously as they walked along together. "You see it's this way. Heinie, he's always lived with Mother and she kep' the house of course, so they kinda took care of each other, so I knew they was all right, and I didn't mind

being off at Elmwood by myself. I useta get down Sundays and afternoons sometimes, so I knew they was all right, and Mother she didn't need me around all the time, and Heinie he's just as good as gold, if he *is* my own brother, I don't care who hears me say it! But, Mrs. Loring, you know how men are. Time come when he wanted to get married, and that's all right, too; a man he should get married while he's young already," said Heinie's sister, relapsing momentarily into the idiom of her youth, as she became engrossed in the narrative. "So he gets married, that's about two years ago now, and he got a nice girl, too, real settled and nothing flighty nor stylish about her. But, Mrs. Loring, you know how it is. It ain't the same for Mother, and she's getting old now — it ain't the same like having your own house, when your son gets married for himself, not but what Katie ain't nice to her, but you're always an extra person around — *you* know how it is?"

Eleanor nodded.

"Yes, that's just it!" said the other. "Without no hard feelings either, because everybody *wants* to act right. But I seen how it was after a little bit, so I fixed it up for Mother to come and us live together, just her and me our own selves, you know. 'What's a daughter for, if she don't get to live with her mother once?' I says to 'em. 'Looks like there ain't any Mr. Man coming along to take care of me,' I says, 'so I guess it's up to Mother!' I just joked along like that to keep Heinie and Katie from their feelings hurt, you know, and so's Mother wouldn't get to worrying over she was a care to anybody — *you* know how that is. So that was when I quit Mr. Loring."

"Oh, you're not there any more?"

"My goodness, no! Not for two years — didn't you know? Well, that's how it was. I didn't get fired either — you needn't to think that for one minute! I ain't the kind to get fired off of no job," said Miss Schlochtermailer, bristling a little. "I been with Loring's twelve years, and I'd 'a' been there right now, hadn't been for this thing. Mother she couldn't go way out there to Elmwood to live, off from her church and everybody she knows, and I couldn't stay in town and work out there — I couldn't have stood that, and there'd have been the car-fare, too. So we got us a little flat on Fifteenth and moved in. Mr. Loring was awfully nice about me leaving. He'd have changed me into one of the other offices, only there ain't any of 'em any nearer than Elmwood scarcely, so there wouldn't have been any good. They don't ever seem to have ice-factories right in town, you know, they're always off outside somewhere. Yes, we're good friends. He give me twenty-five dollars — outside my regular money, you know — when I went away, and says if I ever wanted help or a recommendation or anything to come to him. But I don't guess I'll ever need to; when I get on a job, I *stick*," said the little old maiden proudly. "I went with Mr. Devitt week after I quit Loring's. I didn't have a speck of trouble getting something to do."

"With Mr. Devitt?" said Eleanor, alert at once; "that must be very interesting. I suppose you go to the — the meetings — when he makes speeches? What is he like?"

"*Hey?*" uttered Miss Schlochtermailer, stopping dead, staring, vacant of face. "*Speeches?*" she echoed. "*Oh!*" She looked relieved. "*You're* thinking about Timmie — Chauncey. Law! I didn't

mean *him*! I meant *Mr.* Devitt — the old man — Mike, you know — the Shamrock Construction Company, you know. They do roads and paving contracts and those kind of things, don't you know? The office is in the Kremlin Building. *That's* where I am. My!" She set forward again. "'Speeches!' I *couldn't* think what you meant! Simply couldn't *think* what you meant. Looked like one of us was going crazy! Mr. Devitt would about as soon jump off the Suspension Bridge as make a speech. That's his son you're thinking about."

Eleanor coloured a little, oddly discomfited to realise that she had forgotten there was such a person in existence as the elder Devitt. Yet after all, was not the younger the only real *person* in the family? "I thought perhaps you were Mr. Chauncey Devitt's secretary — er — stenographer, you know."

"Oh my, no! I don't believe he'd have much use for a stenographer. He hasn't got any office even," Miss Schlochtermailer said with a laugh. "The Teamsters' What-you-may-call-'ems have their headquarters in our building, two-three floors over us. But it ain't an office. It's just where they meet. Dalton runs 'em, you know — I guess you've heard about *him* — and Chauncey's in with him, so that's what must have give you the idea that it was his office. But there ain't any *work* going on regular — what *I'd* call work, that is. They have a girl about three mornings in the week to write letters or send out notices, I guess; but I wouldn't take no little bit of a job like that. I wouldn't work for Dalton anyhow, not if he gave me the whole shebang," she added gratuitously.

The speech and tone revealed a sentiment regarding

Mr. Dalton common to all the respectable people Eleanor had met; unanimously they coupled it with an inexplicable toleration. And Chauncey Devitt was even "in with him"—distasteful news! But he had an excuse, which she promptly remembered, and elaborated.

"There must be somebody like that Mr. Dalton to handle the men—that's what you mean when you say he runs them, isn't it?" she said. "I suppose they're a very rough lot, and he's the only kind of man that can do much with them."

"Maybe so—can't prove it by *me*. I don't want to know anything more about 'em than I do already. Enough's a plenty," returned the other, assuming a kind of acid indifference. Her manner changed as she added in a moment, halting: "This here's where we live at, Mrs. Loring. You gotta go to the side entrance behind the grocery, but the rooms is real nice when you get upstairs—running water and gas and everything. I—I'd like ever so much for you to come in and see Mother some time—right now, if you *would*?" she said shyly. "Mother'd be tickled to death, and I'll let her fix up some coffee and cakes—that's real Dutch, you know, like they do in the old country—I've heard her talk about it—when they got callers. She'd love it."

"So would I!" said Eleanor cordially; seldom indeed did she come upon people and homes such as these—it was an oasis in the desert, she thought, touched and amused, the shadow of a great rock in a weary land! The tiny rooms were as tidy and smiling as she had expected with a stand of green plants, a canary in a shining cage; the clean old German woman came and welcomed her delightedly; and di-

rectly the kettle was on the stove—the speckless, polished stove!—and hospitable odours spread abroad.

“I always let her do it, if she can,” Miss Schlochtermailer whispered with a confidential wink as her mother moved to and fro ecstatically busy. “I like her to think she can *do* things. It makes her happier. And there ain’t so much in it for old people, Mrs. Loring. *You* know how that is. Just *living* ain’t any fun. It’s kinda pitiful how easy I can fool her. I get up every morning before she’s awake and get breakfast going and do up the house, and maybe iron out a shirtwaist or some kind of work like that before I go down to the office—I do my marketing on the way. And same way get dinner when I come home evenings. Sundays I got plenty of time to do all my mending and clean around and bake a cake or something—it gives you such a kinda nice home-y feeling, ain’t it? I guess you think I ain’t very religious, but Mother she goes to church for both of us. And you know all the time she never once gets *on*? I jolly her along and tell her she’s doing the house-keeping, and she thinks she’s the whole works!”

“I think *you* work pretty hard,” Eleanor said.

“Oh my, no! Mr. Devitt’s just as easy as easy! And there ain’t so much for the office-girl to do in his kind of business anyhow. I don’t ever get there till seven in the morning and sometimes I’m out by five. I never was in a place where I had it so easy,” declared Miss Schlochtermailer vigorously, quite mistaking the other’s meaning.

CHAPTER IV

TCHAUNCEY DEVITT, the labour “agitator,” was, in fact, on that day when he fell in with Mrs. Amzi Loring, just returning home from one of his many errands of agitating—this time the United Culvert and Bridge Workers in a neighbouring State, whom he had stirred up to demand their rights as regarded more pay and shorter hours, in several outbursts of most impassioned and resounding oratory. The result was a signal victory for organised labour; the culvert and bridge workers struck as one man; the construction companies planted guards and imported outside help; the strikers, on their part, brought in arms, ammunition and dynamite which, in accordance doubtless with their published declaration of a desire to keep the peace, they prudently concealed in the cellar of an abandoned warehouse, where it was presently discovered and despotically confiscated by the police. Fortunately for the cause, however, this did not happen until after the strike-breakers and their guards had been successfully mobbed, one man killed and a number severely injured; a private citizen who had nothing whatever to do with bridges or culverts, being merely floorwalker in a department-store, was shot through the groin and crippled for life; some altruistic culvert and bridge workers blew up a partially completed concrete viaduct, and set fire to the construction company’s buildings near by, but with-

out making a total wreck of either; there was talk of calling out the militia, a measure which, however, the governor refused to take, his enemies basely insinuating that he was "after the labour vote" to re-elect him; and at the end of three weeks of disorder during which each side pointed to the other's activities as "outrages" matters were adjusted by a compromise. The men went back to work at an advance of three and a half cents an hour instead of five, and the public, which had been naturally the heaviest sufferer, made ready to live happily ever after — or until the next time!

"Sure, three cents and a half more ain't much to give them poor boys. They might as well have done it first as last," Mrs. Devitt said warmly. "'Twould have spared a lot of trouble."

"No, it's not much. But it only took the last straw to break the camel's back, ye know," said her husband with a kind of heavy effort at jocularly. "If they stick me the same, ye'll have to go without your new gas-range this winter, Norah. At least, I expect ye'd rather do that than have them bouncing bricks off my head, or than to see me brung home on a shutter, forbye."

"*Mike!* Ye don't say — ! But *your* men would never strike on ye, though!" cried out Mrs. Devitt. "Annyways they wouldn't do *that!* Mishandle ye that have been so kind to um!"

"Wouldn't they? Ye don't know what men'll do. No man knows what his own brother'll do," said Michael gloomily. He pushed away the dishes in front of him which indeed he had scarcely tasted, and began to stuff the tobacco into his short pipe with a hand that was not so firm as it had once been. The

neighbours were right; Mike Devitt was not a young man any more; his face sagged in tired lines; his little blue eyes had lost their fearless and cheerful outlook; they seemed to be forever on the watch, still steady, still open, but misted by an eternal anxiety. Norah looked at him in uneasiness that was half vexation; what ailed the man? He was having another of his despondent spells was her conclusion, and now he would sit around the house mum and glum for days, going out and coming in without a word even to her, except in gruff denial that anything was the matter with him. After a while he would get over it, and act more like his old, even-tempered self, joking and teasing her; but these black moods were growing on him — there was no getting around it, they were growing on him! The wife wondered with a dart of terror whether he had been threatened, it might even be attacked by some worker in his “gangs”; he would not have told her; he never told her anything. She had an instant vision of a cluster of hulking desperadoes lying in wait at some dark corner, with stones, pick-axes, revolvers — of Mike’s senseless and broken body huddled in the gutter, thrust down a sewer! Was that what was on his mind?

“Mother o’ God, Mike —!” she began, quavering; then a saner second thought reassured her. “But Timmie wouldn’t let ye be hurt,” she said gladly. “Nor John Dalton. The men would mind *them*. ’Tis safe and sound ye are, and no need to be afraid of annybody, even if they’d want to do you that mean.”

“Afraid, is it? *Me* afraid? What kind of dam fool talk is that?” shouted Mike, turning a face of sudden fury towards her; he struck his fist on the table with another oath, and broke a saucer, the

pieces flying hither and yon. The unaccustomed domestic clatter, and his wife's appalled eyes calmed him like a spell. "There now, look what I done! If that wasn't the clumsy trick!" he ejaculated with another unconvincing attempt at lightness. "Tst, tst! Ain't that too bad, the saucer's broke entirely! Never mind, Norah, go get yourself another — get the whole dozen, if ye can't find the mate to this one. Never mind — I — I was just in fun, ye know. I didn't mean to be rough."

"Ye never swore at me before," said poor Norah in tears. "What's come over ye to call that fun? Ye scared me."

"Sure, I didn't mean it, I didn't mean it, Norah darlint! I'm that sorry and ashamed! But ye know I'm always flaring out that way, when I get my Irish up, as folks do be saying," her husband said with caresses. But he left her only half comforted. For it was not true that he was given to outbursts of anger; never before in their life together had he shown such want of self-control, and the knowledge lay heavy on Norah's heart.

Not for any length of time, though; her own "Irish" was far too mercurial a quality to leave her long in the depths — or on the heights either, for that matter. And now Timmie — that is, Chauncey — was at home, and it would never do to shadow his all-too-short stay with her worry over his father's worries. To be sure Tim might not notice; it was scant time he had for *her*, the mother thought with a sigh which she instantly stifled, as if her longing were somehow treasonable. Nowadays Norah's worship of and pride in her son were not without a touch of fear; there were times when he seemed so lofty, so distant;

he so plainly belonged to a world dazzlingly greater than hers, greater even than his father's. He was always very kind and gracious to her, let her wait on him to her heart's content, and when she spoke, listened with patience; but when he spoke himself, it was of things she could not understand, of people as aloof as the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, whom Norah had once seen riding grandly in a carriage with his lady by his side. When Tim was a little fellow, she used to make up a story for him out of that magnificent episode; she would not venture on such idle talk now. Tim was hand in glove with potentates so much higher up that he wouldn't give a snap of his finger for all the Lord Lieutenants in Christendom. Truly she had made a gentleman of him with a vengeance; it frightened his mother as much as it pleased her.

Chauncey, for his part, took the credit of the achievement wholly to himself. It was at about this time that, in his public utterances — including interviews with reporters — he introduced those veiled and casual references to the difficulties, disadvantages and bitter trials of a self-made man's career which display, as has been pointed out, a knowledge only to be gained by experience. The revelation strengthened his cordial understanding with what he was wont to call on the platform — with a fine originality — the Forces of Labour; though his struggles had brought him out from their ranks, he was still with them, still of them; with the enslaved against the enslavers; with the chattels against the owners; with the bossed against the bosses! He had declared and defined his position a hundred times in these ringing periods. True, Chauncey's own father was one of the above enslavers, owners, bosses; true, Chauncey spent Michael Devitt's

money freely, and had never done a stroke of work to help earn it; but these facts were not generally known, and the young man himself was not aware of any inconsistency of attitude; he found it no trouble to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds, although that curious athletic feat might embarrass some persons.

It is to be remarked that at twenty-seven or -eight years of age, Mr. Chauncey was a good deal more sophisticated than when we first beheld him delivering the valedictory at Cambridge College, and assuming a limp with the idea of making his presence more impressive. That boyish absurdity would be unthinkable to him now; and besides, if he needed anything of the sort, Chauncey probably knew a trick worth two of *that*. Maybe he had learned by observation, maybe Jack Dalton, that man of many councils, had taught him. But the truth is that Chauncey's endowment of voice and manner and appearance was such as to render him independent of tricks; audiences pronounced him "magnetic," sat rapt, and were ready to be carried off their feet, before he uttered a word. Already he had a vast acquaintance, a vast following of admirers. He knew all the heads of all the Labour organisations in the country, incidentally to his profession, of course; but he knew many heads of other organisations, too, presidents of railroads, owners of mines and manufacturing enterprises, notorious "exploiters of Labour"; he had sat at table with bought henchmen of the Trusts — that is to say, with Supreme Court judges and corporation lawyers; he had shaken hands with a candidate for the Presidency of the United States, had spoken from a Chatauquan rostrum alongside an ex-candidate. No won-

der his mother approached him, metaphorically on bended knees, no wonder his father sat silent in his presence, eyeing him almost as if he were a stranger; on the contrary, the wonder was, as Norah told her Michael in proud and tender awe, that Chauncey should come back to their little home, their little ways at all.

"And sure ye might act more proud over him. 'Twouldn't spoil the boy if ye was to let him know that his father thinks well of him," she said with reproach.

"Go on, Norah, woman, I can't praise him to his face. I'd feel a fool!" said Mike good-humouredly. "It's not a man's way with his son."

"Well, ye're able enough when it comes to telling your hands that they done a good job on the cement walk or the street-crossing or whatever," cried out his wife. "Ye've plenty of good words for them, and not one for your own boy! I suppose it would have been different if ye'd had him with you in the business. *Then* ye might have praised him up once in a while."

"It *would* have been different, Norah," her husband assented with a slight sigh. "Timmie would have known me and the work better, for one thing. As it is he don't know the first thing about either. It's grand to see him where he is, so thick with the great folks, with his fine education as good as any of 'em, and the papers coming out with their: 'T. Chauncey Devitt was seen at his hotel and states,' or: 'Devitt denies' so-and-so, and all the rest of it. Only — There's things I don't like about it. I sometimes wish — Sure, it's a queer sort of muddled world we've got to live in!" he ended philosophically, and cheerfully enough, as Norah was relieved to note.

Before this last home-coming Chauncey had indeed exhibited signs of distaste for Poplar Street, even suggesting an apartment in one of the hill-top buildings, with talk of a servant and boarding at the café, which caused his mother much frightened and unhappy speculation. "What would I be doing with a hired girl? I couldn't sit with my hands folded and watch her work; she'd drive me wild inside a week. A kaffay, is it? Sure, I wouldn't want to eat with a lot of people watching me! And, dearie, 'twould take a mint of money, more than we've any business to spend," she argued timidly. During his absence she fortified herself with fresh objections; but lo and behold, "Dearie" appeared to have forgotten all about his surburban apartment-house aspirations! He looked annoyed when Norah at length tremulously reopened the subject, remarked that *he* was perfectly comfortable in their present home, pointed out that she would dislike the idleness and want of privacy consequent on such a change, and wound up with a severe lecture on the high cost of living! Never was there a more complete face-about; but his mother was too overjoyed to remind him of his former attitude.

Poor Norah Devitt would scarcely have rested so easy if she could have known that her son, for all this display of prudence, was not thinking of her or his father or their petty affairs, but of a pair of brilliant eyes, a head of rich black hair, a tall and lithe figure enticingly curved and tapered, a fine, slender hand just touching his. He was thinking and dreaming of young Mrs. Amzi Loring, in short, and while she remained across the street, oxen and wain-ropes couldn't have dragged T. Chauncey away. In the half-dozen years since he had seen her, Mr. Devitt

had not "guarded her image in his heart," as he fervently told himself—not quite! One may suppose that the gentleman had had some amorous experiences; but those were all forgotten now. He had, it must be admitted, a pretty good gift at forgetting. Also let us admit that he did not lack taste; he was right when he swore inwardly that he had never met any woman to compare with her. Her status as a wife living apart from her husband, which seemed to his mother questionable, not to say scandalous, was an added attraction in Chauncey's eyes; but in spite of it, in spite of the fact that the house wherein the goddess lived, the very windows of her bedroom faced his own not fifty feet away, in spite even of knowing that she knew him, in spite of passing her on the street every day, he did not dare to speak to her after that first time. Her glance set his blood on fire though he could read in it at most only a grave interest; that was what baffled him, put him off, tied his tongue. Yet for her to show that much was something; maybe—roseate fancy!—maybe she would not allow those beautiful eyes to express more! In her Vere de Vere caste—which Chauncey knew as the "smart set"—he suspected that women made a point of not wearing any organ so intimate as their hearts on their sleeves. True, he was familiar with the manners of the "smart set" only as depicted on the stage and in novels; but there was romance in that position too. A man's a man for a' that—particularly a self-made man. He rehearsed a hundred scenes in which alternately she scorned him and he scorned her, both of them meanwhile suffering the deadliest pangs of unrequited passion; not to mention

a hundred other scenes wherein — dreadful to hint! — quite the reverse took place.

Etcetera, etcetera! He said to himself that he was desperately in love; and perhaps he was. His behaviour differed nowise from that of any other young man under the same influence, except that Chauncey did not go mooning about, neglecting his work. He had no work to neglect! He saw Mr. Dalton every day but at the moment that gentleman required nothing of him. The association with Dalton may have lost some of its savour for him by this date; once, that time when, walking together, they passed Eleanor, Chauncey for all his accelerated pulses, felt that he would as lief have not seen her, have gone himself unseen. His patron's eye followed her with an expression for which the young man could joyfully have throttled him.

"Some filly that!" was Mr. Dalton's comment. "Who is she, Tim?"

Chauncey told him frigidly.

"Mrs. Loring? Why, she ain't such a filly after all!" said Dalton, still elegantly figurative. "I remember her now. She's Butch Loring's wife — divorced wife, that is."

"They aren't divorced. They separated, that's all. She couldn't live with that fellow."

Dalton glanced at him. "Just separated? Don't he pay her anything?"

"No!" said Chauncey fiercely. He really knew nothing about it, but much preferred to think of Eleanor as un-alimonied.

"Well, if he's the kind of man she can't live with, I don't see why she don't get a divorce and stick him

for so much a month," said Mr. Dalton, who was nothing if not practical. "Butch can afford it. He's taking down five or six thousand with the Black Sox." Dalton glanced at his companion again, and proceeded casually: "I guess he's worth all of that, too. He's a good ball-player. I never saw a man as big as he is handle himself so well—quick as lightning!"

"I know all about him. I went to college with him," said Chauncey, dissembling his rage as he imagined successfully. He had not thought of being jealous before, but now the idea of Amzi Two as Eleanor's husband devastated him. "He hasn't any mentality! Never did have any!"

Dalton put out a hand and solicitously tickled his protégé's jaw. "Mentality — *ouch!*" he remarked facetiously. "Let's see! I guess you mean horse-sense. Maybe not, but Butch's a whaling good ball-player just the same. Whatever little 'mentality' he's got he keeps it on the job; and that helps a man a lot." And here Mr. Dalton, reading the other's mind with that easy penetration which so often seemed to Chauncey little short of diabolical, gave another quick look into his flushed face, winked, and observed: "Never you mind, Tim, you can easy get the inside track of him. *I ain't* going to try and cut you out, anyhow. Fact is, I wouldn't have much chance with her — *I ain't* her style," said Dalton with perfect good-humour and another display of perspicacity.

It had, of course, occurred to Chauncey to pump Lutie Morehead about the lady-roomer, what she did, what she said, above all he desperately wanted to know whether she ever mentioned *him*, asked any questions about him? But there were obstacles; Lu-

tie herself was the main one! She was forever "flagging" him; if he said two words to her, the next thing she'd be hanging round his neck, he thought disgustedly. Memories of sentimental scenes with her rose up to mock and irritate him; she would infallibly expect him to begin that all over again, and if he did not, if instead he talked of Mrs. Loring — ! Chauncey did actually know enough about Lutie's species by this time, to envisage calamity.

No use, therefore, to look to Lutie; in the plain words which Chauncey employed privately, he did not want to be mixed up with Lutie any more than could be helped. At this gloomy moment, chance did him a good turn by putting young Homer in his way; ordinarily he took no notice of Homer, but the latter having undertaken for a compensation to fetch Mrs. Devitt a slice of ham from Schlochtermailer's, Chauncey, waylaying him at the gate, could pass the time of day without arousing suspicion.

"Ah, Homer!"

"Ah, yourself!" retorted Homer, ceasing to whistle, eyeing him expectantly.

"Pretty busy boy, aren't you?" said Chauncey affably.

"Why? You want anything done?"

"No, oh, no!" said Chauncey, a little taken aback.

"I — ah — er — everybody well at your house?"

"Yep."

"I see you've got your front room rented."

"Yep."

He moved to pass, but Chauncey detained him, casting about frantically for an excuse. "Oh — ah — any of you going to the rally?"

"Yep. I am. I got a job helping Ehrmann's with

the ice-cream freezers — they're doing the catering, you know," said Homer; "Lute's going too, I guess. She said first she couldn't, but I guess she'll make it somehow."

"Ah!" said Chauncey again, tepidly. "Hope it will be a nice day."

"They'll have a big crowd anyhow," said Homer. And now, when Chauncey had given up hope, the unexpected happened! "Mrs. Loring said she was going to go, if it poured down rain. She wants to hear you speak."

Chauncey's heart impossibly got up — turned around — sat down again! He began to laugh nervously. "Mrs. Loring?"

"Yep. She's around here like Miss Penry, you know. She and Hilda Schlochtermajer are going together."

"Well, well!" said Chauncey, from a dizzy elevation. Then he perceived that it had now become possible for him to ask naturally: "What's Mrs. Loring like?"

"Say, you're about the forty-leventh person — man, I mean — that's ast me that!" said Homer, slightly bored. "Why, she ain't *like* anything. She's all right. You can see her every day. She's the one that's got our room, that dark-haired lady, I guess you've seen her."

"Er — maybe I have. Is — is — is she — well, what is she like?"

"I *told* you. She's all right. That is, if you don't ast her too many questions," said Homer; and upon some sudden recollection, he grinned. "Say, you know she's married to this here Butch Loring, you

know who *he* is, the same one that's playing left field for the Black Sox —? ”

“ Yes,” said Chauncey impatiently.

“ Well, you know she won't stay with him, she'd rather come down here and live and go out around like Miss Penry done, you know, and Ma and the rest they think she's kinda nutty. But you take it from me, she ain't! Ma hinted round and then come right out and ast her what for she left Loring, what he done to her and all that, and what do you think Mrs. Loring did? Just looked at Ma and kinda laughed. That's all! Every *thing*!” recited Homer, chuckling. “ Tell you, Ma got *hers* that time!”

Chauncey listened in the seventh heaven, though, to be sure, he was not particularly interested in the tale of Mrs. Morehead's discomfiture. To bring the conversation back to the main point, he said: “ I wonder why she's so anxious to hear me.”

Homer responded frankly that Chauncey might search *him*!

“ She — she didn't say anything more about me? ”

“ Nope! Not 't I heard, anyhow!” Chauncey tipped him recklessly and lavishly a half dollar for running the ham errand, although the boy, who was honest, exclaimed. “ Your mother paid me,” said Homer, astonished. “ Well, all right, if you say so!”

The day of the rally arrived in due course, but Chauncey scarcely knew how he got through the interval. The address he was to give he later incorporated in that one entitled, “ The Price of a Man,” which has become familiar to many audiences. It contains that well-known passage: “ To control industry, to tame it to the usages of racial growth, to

make it subservient to the high needs of life's spiritual and physical evolution — that is the age-long war into which the last century has plunged the world. It is the war of the human race against uncontrolled industry. It is the dim-sighted, gigantic struggle of mankind against the domination of civilisation by MACHINERY, a domination that puts women and children into factories and BREAKS THEM THERE; that makes of the workingman an unthinking shell; that slowly, insidiously threatens the HOME idea; that is shaking WOMEN'S *moral standards* and glutting men's SOULS with unearned WEALTH!"

Contrary to what one might suppose, it was no trouble at all for Chauncey to turn off paragraph after paragraph of close reasoning and lucid exposition like the above; he had the facility of genius. All the while he was thus engaged, he was thinking — alas for *moral standards* and the HOME idea! — about his neighbour's wife. In this weather she went forth every day in plain skirts, plain blouses of a luminous whiteness, which seemed magically to repel dust and soot; the heat had no effect on her; always she was like a fresh cut flower, cool, delicate and crisp yet with textures of alluring suggestion. The morning of the picnic dawned to the joy of the Thirteenth Ward, clear, hot and dry as Death Valley; and Chauncey saw his lady clad as described in white linen, piqué or what-not, mystic, wonderful, waiting on the front steps for Hilda Schlochtermayer, who ere long arrived, also in white, also crisp and clean but with a difference. No *textures* about Hilda; she was all edges like a "saltine" cracker. They went off together; the street was already full of a cheerful mob heading for

the public landing. Mr. Devitt, as orator of the day, did not mingle with these profane vulgar souls on board the *Queen City of the West*; he would go out to Lowery's Beach by automobile.

CHAPTER V

THE address was scheduled for half past three in the afternoon, by which time it was expected that the "barbecue," the fat men's race (Prize: a box of cigars), the three-legged race (Prize: a pair apiece of Solomon & Kabakoff's "Wearever Pants"), the potato race (For ladies. Prize: a solid quadruple-plated silver hand-mirror), the tug-of-war, and the ball-game between the Comers (average age twenty-one) and the Goers (average age thirty-five), would be over. The boat went back at five with those who were already surfeited with the day's combined physical and intellectual entertainment, or who had to get supper and put the children to bed, or for any other reason preferred to be at home; it returned later for the "dancing crowd." Thus all tastes were consulted, and none were allowed to conflict; even the orator must cram all his eloquence into a speech of forty minutes' length — no more were he Demosthenes! Chauncey was what his chief and benefactor, Mr. Dalton, wittily termed "heeled"; that is, he knew the regulations and had timed himself accordingly. He ascended the platform, bowed to the applause with his striking and perfectly spontaneous beauty of movement, and launched out, searching the audience meanwhile for Mrs. Loring. He had thought he could single *her* in her white dress out of any number; but Heavens and Earth, there were countless hundreds of women in white dresses! A mania for white

dresses appeared to have overtaken the entire feminine community. And so far from being tall, slender, fresh, piquant, distinguished, was there ever before such an assemblage of dowdy, dumpy, gawky, string-haired, red-faced, perspiring — briskly he averted his glance! He had caught Lutie's eye!

“ . . . The army of toilers, unable to protect themselves as individuals, and denied the right to organise under threat of discharge and blacklisting . . . ” he declaimed in his strong and thrilling voice, and continued the search. She would be, of course, with Hilda Schlochtermajer, and Hilda was homely enough, in all conscience, to stand out, even from this aggregation, like a sunflower on a coal heap. . . . “ MILLIONS in men and money handed over to some son as a birthday gift — the destinies of THOUSANDS dependent upon a STOCK-MARKET transaction! And yet there is wonder at industrial UNREST — ” There she was!

Chauncey halted inadvertently; some admirers, ingenuously supposing that it was the moment for applause, started off resoundingly, and this gave him time to recover. She was sitting erect and tense, absorbed, listening, one might have said, with every nerve of her; a wave of gratification swept over the young man. He waited for the hand-clapping and shouting to subside with a patient, deprecating smile, his eyes fixed on hers; then began again, directly at her.

“ Ain't he the dandiest *looking* fellow, though! ” a girlish neighbour, quite unknown to Eleanor, sighed in her ear, unable to restrain her enthusiasm. Eleanor drew away, scarcely heeding, but annoyed. She wanted to be let alone, to concentrate every faculty

on following the argument which, she said to herself in humiliation at her own unwonted slowness, was proving much more intricate than she had expected. How ignorant and feeble had been all her conceptions of the relations between Capital and Labour! She now saw how complicated they were. She had indeed suspected that things were gravely wrong; but this man *knew*! His voice moved her to the very core, it was so earnest, so pleading. Of course he had to use some rhetorical and melodramatic devices in speaking to an audience such as this; disliking artifice, he yet must suit the tool to the material, Eleanor sympathetically divined. But he himself was sincerity and conviction embodied. His words that rang with brave and righteous defiance held besides a tone of exalted resignation, as if he felt himself to be a voice crying in the wilderness, yet — because he had the vision! — he could find faith and hope to keep on, undeterred.

“. . . To control INDUSTRY, to tame it to the usages of racial growth, to make it subservient to the high needs of life's spiritual and physical evolution — that is the age-long war into which the last century has plunged the world. It is the war of the human race against UNCONTROLLED industry . . .”

Here the orator was again interrupted by a burst of approval, which, however, may not have been absolutely unanimous, for, under cover of the noise a man's voice behind Eleanor drawled: “‘Uncontrolled industry,’ hey? Devitt ought to see our nigger janitor once! He's got *his* industry under elegant control!”

Somebody else gave a short snort of laughter, and — as the applause began to die down — shot back a whisper: “Say, Jim, I've had 'bout 'nough. What

say we pass up the rest of it, 'n' less go out 'n' get a drink?" Their chairs scraped.

Eleanor glowed with anger. Eyes have they and see not! Ears and they hear not! But this was probably only a fragment expressive of the whole, a single example of the indifference, the dull humour with which that strong and self-sacrificing spirit yonder on the platform had always to contend. By what irony of the gods was it decreed that she who did not need to be persuaded was the most appreciative, the most conscientious listener he had! Once or twice it seemed to her as if he must have found her out, by one of those strange intuitions which we have all felt and followed; his eyes certainly sought hers.

"... And when the robbers, TIME and DEATH
Across my path conspiring stand,
I cheat them with a CLOD, a BREATH,
And pass the SWORD from hand to hand!"

It was over; everybody was getting up, while she still sat tranced, the noble voice vibrating through her; and Mr. Devitt still stood, with one hand resting on the little table at the side of the stage, acknowledging a parting salvo from the audience, and then turning his gaze, most unequivocally this time, in her direction. Oh, he had recognised her, that was it! He bowed with his usual deliberation.

Miss Schlochtermailer rose, too, shaking out her stiff skirts. "Well, I guess that's all, Mrs. Loring. He always ends up that way with a verse of portry. I don't know what the portry's got to do with it, but I never heard him once that he didn't speak some right at the end. That sword-and-hand verse, or else that one about steering yourself straight. I can't remember what it says exactly." She glanced at Eleanor's

irradiated face, and gave an exclamation. "Mrs. Loring! Why, you — you ain't been *crying*? What's the matter? Does it hurt you anywhere? You ain't feeling bad?"

"No, no!" said Eleanor. "I'm well — I'm all right!" And in proof she laughed a little hysterically. "I — I was just *interested* — you know? — in what he said."

"Well, I should *think*!" said Miss Schlochtermailer, surveying her with critical concern. "You look all worked up! I seen other people get that way too, at church revivals and places like that, you know. There, *now* you're laughing real natural!" she ejaculated in open relief. "Honest, I was scared for a minute!"

"Dear me, I must have been a spectacle!"

"Don't you worry!" said the other devotedly admiring. "You couldn't look anything but the sweetest 'n' prettiest thing that ever was, if you tried! Mrs. Loring, I just can't *help* saying it to your face. My, your eyes are just like stars!"

They had elected to go home at five, neither one caring to join the "dancing crowd." It wasn't always so grand anyhow, on the late boat, Hilda averred guardedly; *she* didn't see any use of having such a lot to drink, and the girls and fellows after they got to dancing — oh, she didn't know — it was too kinda sporty for *her*. Now *this* trip you weren't nearly so crowded, and it was mostly family parties, and what if them poor tired, sleepy kids *did* get to scrapping and yelling their heads off, *that* didn't hurt you. And you got home in good daylight. Tell you, a girl had ought to be careful these days! Hers was the ancient

voice of Respectability, which occasionally finds itself crying in a wilderness, too!

Sure enough, they fell in with a number of family parties, among them the Tom Moreheads, Tom freshly shaven and washed, and dressed in his cheap best and manfully lugging the baby, all of which Eleanor was gratified to note. She went and spoke to them; Tom looked up at her with too much admiration by far in his good-natured, characterless face to suit Mrs. Tom, scowling in elaborate gewgaws and open-worked, embroidered, short-sleeved and low-necked finery, from the seat beside him. She had wanted to stay for the dancing, and resented bitterly the "poky" obligations of married life, a husband to be fed, dishes to be washed, a baby to be nursed; and lumped Mrs. Loring in with the rest of her crosses. What business did *she* have coming round pretending to be poor, and looking like that?

"No; she ain't been good — she ain't ever good — she's crying and fussing the whole time," she said savagely in answer to Eleanor's inquiry about the baby. "Well, I guess Tom had better carry his own kid for once. I'm dog-tired with her. Look how's she got me all mussed up! I ain't fit to be seen, she's spoiled everything I got. Seems like a baby's the hottest thing on earth. I'll bet it was ninety to-day, and if you hold her for a minute, you feel like it was a hundred and ninety."

"She's all right with daddy, ain't you, kid?" said Tom, juggling the pallid, sticky, whimpering little creature from one knee to the other.

Lutie sauntered up, and her sister-in-law immediately transferred her resentment to her; but, not

being secretly afraid of Lutie, Mrs. Tom expressed her mood with much more point and venom.

"Hello, Lute! Where's your beau? Chauncey's always so attentive — or did he shake you this time?"

"Ain't it funny, Mrs. Loring, how *common* some people talk, and they're just the kind that never get to learn any different!" said Lutie, achieving a finished unconcern. "Was you asking about Mr. Devitt, Lina? Why, he's gone back in the machine, same way he come."

"Machine? Gee, he has it pretty easy!" Tom remarked, not unreasonably.

"Well, you could too, if you was half as smart as he is!" snapped his wife. Tom smiled feebly over the baby at Eleanor.

"She's kinda tired," he said in apology.

Eleanor judged it high time to withdraw, before relations amongst the Moreheads became any more strained. Besides, she really would like a few minutes apart, to review Mr. Devitt's speech, while it was still fresh in her mind. To her surprise, however, it was even now difficult to recall exactly what he had said; her memory was provokingly blank except as to his eyes, the tones of his voice, his unconsciously dramatic figure. In the middle of this, Lutie came and stood beside her, rather to her annoyance; but Lutie was for once subdued in mood, staring absently at the stretches of sand-bar and drying mud left bare by the shrinking river, at the fleets of coal-barges, the fishing-camps, the shanty-boats, the Government dredge, slipping by in slow defile. After a while she sighed heavily.

"Oh, Mrs. Loring, don't you think he talks beautifully?"

"He? Oh, you mean Mr. Devitt?" said Eleanor, somehow disconcerted to find that they had been thinking about the same person with an equal absorption. "Why, I —"

"Of course, though, *you're* used to it," said Lutie, half envious, half wistful. "You hear your uncle all the time — the one that writes the books — of course you've heard him talk a lot."

"Well — er — my uncle rather makes fun of things. He's — he's not at all like Mr. Devitt. He hardly ever lets you see his — his serious side — what he *really* thinks, you know," Eleanor explained reluctantly; it sounded lame in her own ears. Never before had the thought of her uncle been unwelcome to her, but just now — ! A curious and irritating uneasiness invaded her. No, her Uncle Marshall did not "talk beautifully"; it was impossible to imagine him "talking beautifully" according to Lutie's standard, that is to say, in any fashion remotely resembling Mr. Devitt. The mere notion, as Eleanor was uncomfortably aware, would fill him with stark delight. He was easily capable of making fun of Mr. Devitt among the thousand other people — including himself — that he ruthlessly made fun of; nothing was sacred to Uncle Marshall, and nobody safe from his innocent-sounding comments.

She felt Lutie at her side give a kind of twitch, and looked around and saw Miss Schlochtermailer coming towards them with what dark and picturesque and cavalier personage — !

"That's her! Mrs. Loring, I want you to be acquainted with Mr. Devitt," Hilda proclaimed. "I just been telling him how *interested* you was!"

Their hands touched. A bolt of fire, a bolt of ice

sped through the young man. What was she saying?

"Oh, but we've met! Isn't that so, Mr. Devitt? Only it was so very informally over a mud-puddle that we've both been undecided since whether we ought to speak or cut each other dead!"

Chauncey was momentarily taken aback by her frankness; the next instant he was inwardly pronouncing it with rapture "cute." He had no answer ready, but stood looking down at her, smiling and reddening a little, boyishly and very becomingly embarrassed.

"Really we were both very stiff and absurd, weren't we?" said Eleanor with a little knowing, confidential grimace that Chauncey found utterly enchanting, no less so than her words. It was provoking that he still could think of no rejoinder sufficiently bright, but Eleanor should have been satisfied with the way he looked at her.

"Thought you were going back to the city in your machine, Chauncey," Lutie said, harmlessly enough, but Chauncey forthwith hated her. He hated her for that familiar address — for her misleading air of proprietary knowledge of his movements, which were none of her business — for putting him to the trouble of inventing excuses — for rolling her eyes meaningly at him — for being fat — for existing at all on the same planet with himself and Mrs. Loring!

"No!" he said shortly. "I hadn't any idea of it. It's not my machine. I haven't any." His eyes went back to Eleanor.

"What's good enough for the rest of us's good enough for *you*, ain't it, Chauncey?" said Miss Schlochtermailer, maternally.

"I hope so!" said the young man, with a fine lifting of the head.

Eleanor, watching him, said to herself that she could understand how Lutie might irritate him; it would be misery to such a spirit to have any act misconstrued in Lutie's peculiarly sordid and petty way. She spoke to him impetuously; nothing "cute" about her manner now! "It's true what Miss Hilda was saying just now, Mr. Devitt, I'm very much interested in your work. All this time, I've been wanting to speak to you, to—to ask you about things, you know?"

"Yes?" said Chauncey gravely.

"I've been so much puzzled. I see things happening that I *know* are all wrong, yet everybody takes them for granted, even the people that are suffering by them! I feel as if people like myself who are a little outside of it, ought to *do* something—it's not right, it *can't* be right for us to stand and look on—?" She paused on an upward inflection, and Chauncey bent his head in slow and melancholy recognition of the evils she had marked, like a sad young prophet.

"But I don't know how to begin! I don't know what to do!" Eleanor turned her flushed, lovely, enthusiastic face full on him with a look almost pleading. She was devoutly and most self-forgetfully in earnest. If that ironic little man, her uncle, could have seen and heard her, he would have been stirred to the depths of the soul which he would probably have vehemently denied possessing; Marshall would have found her pathetically splendid with her vague, brave convictions, her wasted fires.

"Ah, but do any of us know what to do, Mrs. Loring?" Chauncey said with a tired smile.

“Why, *you* do! You’re doing something all the time. I suppose it’s like rolling a mill-stone uphill, but you keep at it anyhow!”

Chauncey shrugged. “Oh, *my* small efforts — ! Wouldn’t you like to sit down? There’re two places over there.”

They established themselves by the rail. Chauncey leaned one elbow on it, propping his head on his hand, and gazed at her pensively. Neither of them knew what had become of the other couple, and alas, neither of them cared. As a matter of fact, Miss Schlochtermailer had benevolently drawn Lutie away, hooking an arm into hers, for a stroll around the decks.

“I know she wants to talk to him — you oughta seen her this afternoon while he was making his speech — all worked up ready to cry! Don’t ask *me* why, ’cause I’ll never tell you! I can’t make head nor tail out of that kinda high-brow stuff!” said the little stenographer with a species of affectionate amusement. “But she’s perfectly wrapped up in it, and all I got to say is, if they want to talk, for the Lord’s sake let ’em! Only you ’n’ I don’t have to stand it!” Lutie allowed herself to be trailed along, not very graciously, battling against certain shadowy misgivings.

Meanwhile, Eleanor was experiencing anew that mortifying sensation of not being able to lay hold on anything in the labour-leader’s address, potent as had been its effect on her. She was sure that he had touched on many points upon which she urgently needed further illumination, but was baffled by the persistent fact that she could not remember them! How talk intelligently to a man about his statements and opinions, when to save her soul she could not

quote a single word of his concerning them? That phrase "uncontrolled industry" indeed returned to her, but now accompanied by the recollection of the two unappreciative men behind her, it only evoked a heinous desire to laugh! She ended by saying rather timidly: "The whole thing is very hard to understand, isn't it, Mr. Devitt? All those questions you've studied, I mean. They — they're very complicated."

"Why, no. I've always found them very simple."

He smiled at her kindly, indulgently. "Of course he's used to banalities such as that remark of mine!" thought Eleanor; and she was silent a moment, vexed with herself, looking down, playing with the tassel of her parasol. Chauncey continued to gaze, admiring her eyelashes, her ear with a loose tendril of hair curling caressingly around the pink lobe of it. She raised her eyes, and he hastily turned away his own — not soon enough, however, to avert the dumbfounding suspicion that for the first time shot through Eleanor's mind. The next instant she told herself angrily that it was ridiculous.

"I daresay it *does* seem simple to you. But other people don't understand. That accounts for their opposition, don't you think? Because I'm sure nobody is really *mean*. They don't understand, that's all —?"

She halted as before with a questioning rise in her voice that Chauncey found charming — though, this time, he began to wish that she wouldn't be quite so "intense." It kept him on the stretch, not knowing what extraordinary unknown and therefore unsafe territory she might go exploring into next. Mr. T. Chauncey Devitt's type of student and philosopher

is one that invariably keeps the straight and beaten path. He bowed his head again in grave assent.

"I hope you don't mind my coming to you with my difficulties," said Eleanor apologetically. "Sometimes this afternoon, I thought you were speaking directly to me, as if you realised that I honestly *wanted* to be told — that I was at least *trying* to follow you —"

Chauncey received an inordinately encouraging thrill. "*I was!* I was speaking to you," he said, his fine voice trembling slightly. "Only to you!"

"I've — I've often heard that orators would single out some person in the audience —" Eleanor stammered, startled; "somebody that seemed to be — er — sympathetic —"

"Yes. Soul speaks to soul sometimes. One feels it," said Chauncey, venturing farther.

And what would Mr. Marshall Cook have said to that specimen exhibit of the art of "talking beautifully"? He came into Eleanor's mind again at the moment that she darted her companion a glance edged like a razor. That was exactly the sort of speech with which Uncle Marshall amused himself when people bored him with exactly the sort of speech she had just been making, she thought. She ought to have known better; she had got what she deserved. The difference between her and Uncle Marshall's victims was that whereas they were unconscious and consequently unhurt, *she* was clever enough to know when she had been stupid! Mr. Devitt made fun more openly, more mercilessly than her uncle, but she rather liked him for it. The man had to do *something*; in all probability he was fairly hounded by sentimental females who "thought he was speaking directly to them," and

who considered themselves "sympathetic"—*Gr-r-r!*

"You're not angry with me?" said Chauncey, alarmed by her silence, her quick colour, and most of all by the sudden deadly brightness of that glance. "Mrs. Loring, did I offend you by — by saying that?"

To his relief, she laughed — a wholly delightful, wholly friendly laugh. The look she gave him now was gay, mischievous, confidential. "No, oh, no, Mr. Devitt! I'm only angry at myself for being silly. I promise you it won't happen again!" she told him — a perfectly incomprehensible statement to Chauncey, but the infatuated young fellow was too happy to trouble about deciphering it; it was enough that she should be ready, even openly pleased to establish him on this blissfully intimate footing. For the short remainder of the excursion up to the final moment on Poplar Street, she was not once "intense" again; on the contrary, enchantingly "cute"!

CHAPTER VI

DURING the following days it was natural that Eleanor and her new acquaintance should encounter each other even more frequently than before. Perhaps they were looking for each other; one of them, at least, was not above timing and mapping out his walks abroad to that sole end. For now Chauncey need no longer restrict himself to grave, wordless salutations, to prolonged and deep-eyed gazing. He could boldly cross over and speak to her, join her and walk by her side, help her on or off the street-car, carry a parcel or mail a letter for her, hold an umbrella over her. He forced himself to be satisfied with these snatches of her company, brief and public as they were; for deliberately to propose seeing her elsewhere, or to visit her at the Morehead house was unthinkable. Putting aside that unfortunate, lovelorn, jealous Lutie, it was unthinkable. There were moments when he desperately chafed at these restraints, told himself that he could not endure the tantalising situation, devised one insane scheme for altering it after another until his brain ached — all to no purpose. Knowing the young man, one might have supposed that he would infinitely relish the romance of his position, in love with a woman of different social rank, a married woman at that, beautiful and unhappy! Time was when Chauncey could have dreamed of nothing more delightful than to find himself in such a rôle. Lo, in actual practice, it turned

out to be sheer torment! It devastated his nights, took away his appetite, gave him a distaste for everything else in life. He passed hours in alternations of miserable hope that she knew — that she did not know — that she would stay on Poplar Street forever — that she would go back to her home where he could follow and see her in private. As has been hinted, for a bachelor to go calling on a pretty young married woman, to say nothing of carrying on an intrigue with her, would not be respectable on Poplar Street; but Chauncey entertained the belief — not altogether erroneous — that in Mrs. Loring's circle, it might be done, if done with discretion and good taste. However, there was no present outlook that way; there was no outlook in any direction; contrariwise, there was the imperative necessity for him to keep his state from the public knowledge. Chauncey did his best, warring against absent-mindedness, attacks of the blues, the disposition to "hang around" Mrs. Loring too markedly, to look at her too often, too long, too ardently. He did his best with tolerable success, if one could judge by the fact that nobody appeared to notice anything amiss with him, or asked any suspicious question — excepting Jack Dalton — Dalton of the Mephistophelian powers of observation! — who startled him out of a sombre mood one day by inquiring what was up, and had the little grass-widow showed him the frozen face?

"I — I — I don't know what you're talking about," stuttered Chauncey, purple to the eyebrows, showing so unmistakably that he knew perfectly well what the other was talking about, that Dalton roared out with laughter.

"'S all right, Timmie! I ain't going to give you

away," he said, when he could speak, wiping tears of the keenest enjoyment from his eyes. "What would I want to talk about it for anyway? That wouldn't get me nothing!" And in fact, Chauncey knew that the dictator's word was to be depended on in this instance; Mr. Dalton had eminently the qualities of his Satanic gifts.

Besides, he had other business of real importance on hand, business which might presently require the talents of T. Chauncey Devitt, too. About this time rumours began to circulate of new labour "agitation." It was amongst the ice-men, teamsters, pullers and so on; they were to be organised for mutual defence and protection, to obtain more pay, easier hours, freedom on Sundays — to control their industry, in short. In their union there would emphatically be strength, for these things being denied, they would incontinently go on strike, and *then* where would everybody be with the thermometer at ninety in the shade?

"Sundays off, hey?" young Homer Moreland remarked. "Well, that'll be another day for Tom to get soused on!"

"Not if there's no ice to chill the stuff with, Homer," said Mr. Kendrick; "you can't drink lukewarm beer — not enough to get happy on, that is."

"Oh, the s'loons'll have ice all right; the breweries make it theirselves. They won't have no trouble. Not while Jack Dalton's thirsty anyhow," said Homer sardonically. "You wait and see!"

But those who adjusted themselves to follow this advice would have been disappointed. For, all at once, the talk died down; nobody was thinking about the woes of ice-men or their organisation against oppression; nobody dreamed of striking; the vans of the

Independent Company, the Eureka Fuel & Cold Storage Company, the North Hills Ice Delivery, the Elmwood Ice Company, the A. Loring & Company (which, it was popularly believed, owned all the others) continued to drive about the town, melodiously proclaiming their wares at everybody's back-door. People drew a relieved breath, and took a dime's worth instead of the usual twenty cents', because for an odd coincidence, the weather had just turned cool. A wave of low temperature swept the country; Nashville reported 64° at twelve noon, Chicago a drop of thirty in one half-hour; frost was feared in North Dakota; corn quotations soared on all the exchanges; according to the Bureau, the refreshing condition was to last a week; the newspaper humourist wanted to know where his ear-muffs had been put; and — to repeat — by the strangest coincidence, the ice-men ceased to discuss their wrongs and the possible remedies.

Incidentally, T. Chauncey was left at leisure to pursue the path that is notoriously the reverse of smooth. "If she turns you down again, go and get drunk, Tim," the secretary of the Federated Teamsters counselled him benevolently. "You got plenty of time. Nothing doing around here for a week or so yet!" As it happened, however, that was a means of solace not acceptable to this hero; he had always been a commendably temperate young man.

Moreover, to tell the truth, a much more diffident lover than Chauncey would have perceived that the lady, if she did not absolutely encourage him, had certainly not as yet "turned him down." What was she thinking of? Whither was she drifting, and letting him drift? She herself deliberately refused to know. Mrs. Eleanor Loring was thirty and some-

thing; with all her sporadic unconventionality, she was a completely sophisticated young woman who had spent a very considerable part of the fifteen years since her entrance into society in accumulating experience with the ways of men in love, having received, it was authoritatively reported, numberless offers of marriage any one of which would probably have been preferable to her ultimate choice. Yes, Eleanor was too thoroughly seasoned not to know what was happening; by this time, she could not pretend that Mr. Devitt sought her because of an insatiable interest in her work, or that she was allowing him to, because of an insatiable interest in his. She might tell herself all she chose about not wanting to bore him by talking his shop or her own, she was entirely aware that philanthropics, social regeneration, the rights of man, the menace of class, and all the rest of it were the last subjects in the world they thought of in each other's company! She was not vain, not sensual; if any one had told her that the spectacle of this picturesque young man — who was also a man of mark — helplessly following her about, unable to look at her without entreaty, ready, as the phrase goes, to lie down and let her walk over him — if any one had told her that this spectacle subtly flattered her, or appealed as subtly to other senses, Eleanor would have been justly indignant. And yet —!

Even when the officials of such labour organisations as the Federated Teamsters began their activities among the ice-men, activities of which the outcome was the main topic of conversation with the worried housekeepers of Poplar Street, Eleanor did not once bring the matter up with the one person who was in a position to give her authentic information. T.

Chauncey must have known all there was to know about the facts and arguments on both sides; he was, naturally, in the thick of it, present at every conference, constantly interviewing or being interviewed. One would have supposed that Eleanor would jump at this rare chance for education, for enlightenment, for acquiring that priceless thing, the point of view. She did nothing of the sort! It was not that she doubted Mr. Devitt's aims or motives, or the high quality of his spirit and intelligence — oh, no! But she confessed to herself with a great effect of frankness a fear that, like most reformers, he was not practical. His dreams were beautiful, they were noble, they corresponded to his voice and appearance — but they were dreams. They distorted his vision of realities. Take this very business of the ice-men and their projected strike: whatever Mr. Devitt thought, it was impossible to believe that Mr. Loring ever oppressed anybody; and on the other hand, there was Tom Morehead to whom, Eleanor thought in exasperation, a little oppression might do a world of good! Tom had been backsliding again lately. Perhaps neither one of these men fairly represented his class, but if that were the case, the futility, the actual injustice of generalising about them became more apparent — to her, at least; Mr. Devitt, with his eyes lifted up to the hills, saw nothing in between! And there was another aspect of the question which it seemed strange the labour-leader should have overlooked — for no man so great-souled would have deliberately refused to consider it: however greedy and selfish and despotic the ice-kings, however much they needed restraint and discipline, they could never in all their days do their fellow-citizens one-tenth as much harm as these strik-

ing employés could in a single twenty-four hours. Eleanor thought of the hospitals, of sick women in the tenements she knew so well, of the wilting babies, of the children, hot, bare-legged, their grimy little foreheads plastered with moist hair, gathered at the tail-boards of the ice-wagons, of a poor fat man she had seen carried into a drug-store the other day, his big body sagging flabbily like a half-stuffed sack, one of the Samaritans rushing to ring up a doctor, the drug-store young clerk energetically scooping handfuls of crushed ice out of the freezers behind his soda-water counter and piling them all over the sufferer's unconscious head. Obviously Mr. Devitt did not realise that it was upon the innocent and helpless public that the penalty would fall most heavily, rather than upon the ice-manufacturers, or he would have started this "agitation" in winter-time. But on her reciting this surmise to Miss Schlochtermailer, the latter received it sceptically — in fact, not without impatience.

"Oh my, Tim ain't got anything to say about it, Mrs. Loring," she said. "He just goes round, making the speeches — he can make first-rate speeches, you know, and I guess it kind of stirs the men up and keeps 'em going. But he ain't got any real *say*. It's Dalton that runs 'em. You can't tell *me* anything about it. I *know*!" said the little old maid, jabbing a hat-pin through the crown of her hat and through the ornate wad of frizzes on top of her head with fierce movements. "Dalton's in it for what he can get out of it — why, *everybody* knows *that*! Everybody knows Jack Dalton. He'd see this whole town frying in the bad place, and he wouldn't give anybody a square inch of ice till he got their last dollar! That's the kind *he* is! Well, I s'pose we gotta stand it!" she added with

a philosophical pessimism. "Heinie's worried like everything. It'll put his business on the blink, not having no ice to keep the meat with, you know. He says you can't hardly keep it as it is, with all the ice you can stuff in the refrig'rator. I told him why didn't he stock up with a lot of hams and tongues and corn-beef; people'll buy smoked meat anyhow. But he's worried. He says trouble is if your trade once gets away from you, why it's *gone!* You don't ever get it back. Well, I know one thing! I'm going to get ice for my mother and keep her comfortable, if I got to pack it from the fact'ry on my back!"

Eleanor herself had not remembered the butchers and greengrocers, Heinie and the other Heinies! Here were more unfortunates! "I — I don't believe Mr. Devitt can know — why don't some of you that have known him so long go and tell him —?" she ventured, hesitating. But the other took her up almost snappishly.

"'Tain't Tim Devitt at all, ain't I just been telling you? It's Dalton."

"Well, what position has Mr. Devitt got in the office then?" said Eleanor, beginning to be somehow irritated with Miss Schlochtermailer who *would* keep on harping on Dalton; Eleanor did not want her to talk about Dalton; she wanted her to talk about Mr. Devitt.

"I don't know! Dalton's s'posed to be secretary of the Federated Teamsters, but I don't know what *he* does either," said Hilda scornfully unconcerned. "You know, Mrs. Loring," she went on confidentially; "seeing that man — Dalton, I mean — and how he does has kinda set me against the whole union business. Maybe some of 'em are all right; but *I* ain't

ever needed to be in no union, and I've worked as hard as any man and made my living same as a man ever since I was fifteen years old. No, *sir!* You couldn't get me into one of 'em, not if you was to take and prove to me it would double my sal'ry. What good's that going to do you, if you gotta pay out a lot of it in dues? S'pose I'm going to give up a lot of my good money for some crook like Jack Dalton to live on? 'Cause that's where the dues goes, ain't it? Not for me! I seen too much." She became more confidential. "Say, do you know how he does? He comes into our office — *old* Mr. Devitt's office, you know — 'bout once in every so often, whenever he wants money, I guess, and just regularly holds poor old Mr. Devitt up! Yes, *sir!* I've known him to time and again. I wouldn't give him a cent, if *I* was Mr. Devitt, but he's scared Dalton'll call his teamsters off and tie up the work for months and months and ruin him like they done some contractors already. He digs up every time regular as clockwork; he's as good as a bank-account for Dalton. Say, I feel sorry for the old man. Irish are awfully funny, ain't they? He gets way down in the mouth so you'd think he was going to suicide the next minute, and then first thing you know he's way up and all excited and happy as can be! He's mostly down though, nowadays. But that's one reason I can't stand for the unions."

Decidedly, Eleanor thought, Miss Schlochtermailer, industrious, upright, self-denying and in the main sensible woman as she was, could be mortally tiresome at times. It was evident that she really knew nothing about the Teamsters' Union or either the older or younger Mr. Devitt's relations with it; she merely felt a bitter personal prejudice against this Dalton man.

It was probably justifiable, Eleanor admitted to herself again with a fine show of frankness and impartiality; Dalton, by all accounts, must be a scoundrel; but that was no reason why the union should be saddled with his misdoings. As to Mr. Chauncey Devitt taking his orders from Dalton — which was what the stenographer seemed to intimate — Eleanor in private disdainfully refused to believe any such statement. It was mere gossip to which their association lent a colour of truth — an association imposed on the younger man by — by — er — by circumstances, she somewhat cloudily concluded, and without a doubt thoroughly distasteful to him. A practical man with an eye to sordid details might have avoided it; but what would you have? Mr. Devitt was not practical; he dwelt on Olympus.

“One of their kinks is these ‘sympathetic’ strikes,” pursued Miss Schlochtermailer, oblivious of her companion’s unresponsive attitude. “Because the teamsters strike, why then the culvert and ditch workers, they got to walk out too. Same like if we was all in unions, I’d got to strike if the scrubwomen in our building did, see? Can you beat it? But the limit is when they tell you if you’re union, you can’t work with nothing but union things — union-made hatchets and trowels and bricks and paint and machinery, according to what you use in your trade, you know. I guess that sounds to you like baby-talk, but it’s the solemn truth, and there’s plenty of grown-up men that stand up for it. When Dalton started that stuff with Mr. Devitt, I just butted right in — I couldn’t help it! ‘Well, gee-whiz!’ I says. ‘What you going to do ’bout the sand and gravel, Mr. Devitt? They ain’t union-made. Here the Lord went and put ’em round

everywhere for anybody to use that wanted! What do you know about that, anyhow, Mr. Dalton?' says I. 'Looks like you couldn't ever get God Almighty into your union! Maybe you don't want Him, though. Some folks is awful choose-y,' I says. Dalton didn't get mad. He just laughed and says: 'Say, I'm real scared of you, Miss Hilda. You act like you was one of these suffergettes!' And then he went right ahead, and made old Devitt buy a whole outfit of picks and shovels and wheelbarrows and things like that that he didn't need any more than he needed another set of arms and legs. What he had was good enough, only it didn't come from union concerns, see? The way Dalton put it up to him he couldn't help himself; but all the time he knew that Dalton was getting a rake-off on every last one of them tools, or he wouldn't have lifted a finger about 'em, union or no union. That's the way it goes right along. Well, I don't know what you are going to do about it!"

Eleanor listened reluctantly. It was as if the homely fabric of the other's speech were woven upon some stout warp of common-sense and right-mindedness, nearly resembling that which underlay the talk of old Amzi Loring, of Mr. Kendrick, even of so immeasurably different a person as her uncle, Marshall Cook. As with them, it annoyed, it somehow obscurely dismayed her to find that she could not think of anything equally plain and reasonable sounding to bring forward on the opposite side. Of course neither party was wholly right or wholly wrong. When so many masters abused their power, it was natural that abuses should have crept into the management of the men's affairs, too. Such anecdotes as Miss Schlochtermailer's proved it; and what Eleanor

would have liked would have been, not an argument, but the same species of anecdote to offer in rebuttal. But she could not remember any; she had never heard any as apt and pointed! The truth was that everything she had encountered in newspapers, pamphlets and magazines in the shape of printed utterances from the apostles of Labour had seemed to her against her will to be incendiary rubbish. To be sure she had not yet read anything of Mr. Devitt's; somehow she did not want to; he was so impractical. It was a pity. If he could only possess — for righteous ends — a tithe of Dalton's deadly efficiency —! But apparently he was not always able even to protect his father against it.

Now the mercury began again to climb steadily; and simultaneously a returning tide of disquieting news about the ice-situation rose and rose. Meetings were held; various compromises were suggested, as that the ice be still delivered on Sundays, but the men work in shifts; the Associated Charities published a letter of appeal to both sides; all the doctors in town signed another; the editors unanimously hedged (the typesetters being very strongly organised) so that, as Mr. Kendrick observed with grim amusement, it would have taken a Philadelphia lawyer to tell which party any newspaper in town supported. Mr. Loring, representing the manufacturers — indeed he was regarded by the labour-leaders as the very head and front of the opposition and it was against him that their fulminations were mainly directed — stubbornly refused to recognise the union; the union thereupon refused to submit the matter to arbitration; it was a deadlock.

As a piece of news all this was welcomed with rap-

ture from day to day by journalists all over the country; for these events took place a year or so before that famous date when the German siege-guns opened on the forts at Liège, and in those remote days, in the dead of summer it was likely to be a dull and trying business to get the columns filled. The ice-strike crowded even the sporting gossip from the front page, so that it was quite casually that one learned that the Black Sox, assisted by native Ohio talent in the person of that incomparable left-fielder and all-around athlete Butch Loring, would be in town next week for a series of four games, one of them a double-header. As to "Society Jottings," scarcely anybody troubled to read that department of the *Observer*. All the world not already at the seashore or the mountains was hurrying to get away before the lack of ice was added to the discomforts of a Middle-Western July; one noted, however, that the Andrew J. Grace ladies had not gone yet, and — by another of those coincidences with which this chapter has been so occupied — Marshall Cook, the well-known author, was expected to arrive Monday for a short visit.

CHAPTER VII

THE last ice-wagons went their rounds late Monday afternoon, their crews benevolently urging everybody to "stock up with ice all they could"; and Tuesday morning dawned scarcely hotter than the stifling night preceding it, but pitilessly bright. The union-leaders were as good as their word; not an ice-man was visible or audible — professionally, that is. There were doubtless numbers of them upholding this spirited stand against tyranny by loafing about the streets, the saloons, the moving-picture theatres, or perhaps the neighbourhood of the ice-factories. Tom Morehead was at home drunk, rather luckily for him, as it enabled him to prove an alibi later when there was a question raised as to the personnel of the crowd that collected out at Elmwood, when Mr. Loring's arm was broken by a stone thrown through the office-window. The city, however, was not altogether ice-less; housekeepers heard with relief qualified by a new dread that the factories would keep on producing ice as long as their engineers did not walk out "sympathetically"; so, for a while at least, the problem was merely how to get it transported. Thereupon the streets all at once swarmed with automobiles, elegant little electric coupés, road-worn runabouts, limousines, touring-cars new and old, with all sorts and conditions of horse-drawn vehicles, from broughams and barouches to jolt-wagons, every one carrying its block of ice swathed in old carpets, quilts, newspapers, anything to keep the invaluable

freight from leaking off before it reached the refrigerator; in a day or two these sights became too common to be noticed. Even the goat-carts, wheelbarrows, baby-carriages and bicycles that were presently pressed into service especially in the cheaper quarters of the city, even the men laboriously bearing a chunk on their shoulders and squirming as the water trickled down their backs, even the women struggling along with a poor five cents' worth in a market-basket or a net bag — even these ceased to draw a passing glance. It was astounding how readily and resourcefully the public met the emergency; astounding the good-nature with which it bore a hardship which was entirely unnecessary and undeserved. The visitor from Mars about whose possible opinions we occasionally hear a discussion, could not have been shown a spectacle more typically American.

“Tell you what, though, it ain't going to last this way,” Homer confided to Eleanor in the course of a business conference. Homer had purveyed himself a soap-box mounted on a dismembered pair of roller-skates, with which he was carrying on a thriving trade delivering ice at “two cents a throw” in small lots up and down Poplar Street and the vicinity; and Eleanor had engaged him on the above terms to take a lump to a sick woman on the third floor of Fifty-two Amelia just around the corner. “It won't last, 'cause it's too easy,” said Homer sagely. “First thing you know nobody'll care whether there's any ice-men or not; everybody's getting ice somehow right along. The strikers know they gotta think up something else, and they'll do it direckly. Like calling out the engineers or something. I guess the only reason they ain't done that already is they gotta make a deal with 'em. The

bosses of the engineers' union ain't going to start no sympathy strike without there's something in it for *them* —"

"Where are you getting your ice?" Eleanor interrupted hastily. She did not care to hear any more of Homer's appallingly shrewd-sounding comments, assuring herself vehemently that Mr. Devitt would never lend himself to any bargaining such as the boy intimated.

"Engine-house. Only they won't sell you none after 'leven 'clock, so you gotta hustle. Stand in line, of course, after you get there," said Homer, preparing to hustle, as aforesaid. Eleanor, in the spirit of curiosity, accompanied him.

"How do *they* happen to have it?" she wondered.

Homer couldn't say. All *he* knew was that you could get it there. They just knocked off a chunk anyhow with a mallet and chisel, so sometimes you got a good big lump for your nickel, and sometimes hardly nothing. "You gotta pay just the same. Ice is ice."

Approaching the engine-house they found the street lively as an ant-hill with ice-buyers — a coloured man with a lump perched on top of a wash-basket full of soiled clothes and guyed in position with string; two young girls giggling along with a piece in a coal-scuttle; a man shoving a block onto the rear platform of the street-car amidst the free raillery of the passengers thereon; another man trundling his supply in a keg; a haggard woman with a dishpan. The wide doorway was almost blocked with marketers, not standing in line as Homer had described them, but camped about everywhere, and frenziedly dodging and elbowing and edging to the front at every chance, in spite of the efforts of the policeman stationed there to

keep them in order. "No hurry now, folks, no hurry! First come, first served, of course, as long as she last. If you don't get none to-day, that'll learn you to get up a little earlier to-morrow. Here, you boy, you go back there where you belong! I *saw* you, now! Look out, lady, that coloured lady's ahead of you! Well now, ma'am, I can't help if if she got here first. No, mister, I can't go in there and get it for you. No, I can't speak to the cap nor nobody —" this was the burden of his oratory, reiterated incessantly.

Notwithstanding his vigilance, Homer skilfully inserted himself among the first ranks, whence he sent a grin and wink to Eleanor standing out of the crowd on the opposite sidewalk. She could see a pair of shirt-sleeved men going to and fro under the gleaming paint and polish of the engine and the yawning horse-collars; above two or three firemen lounged in the windows, looking down unconcernedly. The people jostled one another on the cobbles, some of them weary and glum, some making a frolic of it, one man indifferently settled on the handles of his wheelbarrow, reading the morning newspaper in the middle of the car-tracks. It was glaringly hot; the heat seemed to come up in waves laden with odours of manure, garbage and sweating bodies. Presently the crowd swayed and scattered, as a trolley-car stalked by two automobiles clanged around the angle at the head of the street; the man on the wheelbarrow looked up, folded his paper with deliberation unmoved by a dozen wildly screeched warnings, and withdrew himself and his equipage at the same leisurely pace in the exact nick of time.

"Look who's here, Timmie!" one of the occupants of the first automobile grunted, removing his big cigar; he had quick light eyes that roamed everywhere and

saw everything in a second, and he burst into a thick chuckle at the expression of his companion's face when the latter, following his advice, caught sight of the tall woman on the sidewalk. "By —! She sure has got the figure!" added Mr. Dalton with admiring profanity.

He laughed again as the young fellow without a word to him jumped out of the car and shouldered impatiently through the crowd. Chauncey had reached a stage where he didn't give a damn who knew it or what they thought, his patron remarked inwardly with the amused and contemptuous sympathy which — we are told — all the world feels for a lover, balanced by a complimentary approval of Chauncey's taste. She was not only pretty but tolerably certain to be expensive, in Mr. Dalton's opinion; Tim wasn't any piker, anyhow!

Eleanor had caught sight of Dalton, too, with her familiar prick of repugnance; it is not easy to understand how she contrived immediately to put him and his manifestly close relations with the other, out of her mind as Chauncey took her hand. There was a good deal of staring and nudging, and talk rumbled briskly behind him. She was vexed to feel the colour coming up to her face; it always showed so! And in fact, she could see his eyes following it avidly.

"Mrs. Loring! What are *you* doing here?"

Eleanor managed a laugh to keep herself in countenance. "Doing? Why, what should I be doing? Getting ice, to be sure!"

"*You!*" Chauncey was so openly horrified, looking all around her meanwhile for the pan, bucket, basket or what-not in which he conceived she must be meaning to convey it away, that Eleanor laughed out

genuinely enough this time. It almost restored her self-possession to observe him so ingenuously lacking it.

"Don't look so shocked! The Morehead boy's getting it for me."

"Oh! But you — do you —?"

"No, it's not for myself. It's for one of my poor people."

"Oh! Still, you — you ought not to be here," said Chauncey, not trying to subdue the note of tender authority in his voice. "You ought not to be going around in this heat. You will make yourself sick —"

"Fiddle-de-dee! — Begging your pardon, Mr. Devitt! Do I look sick?" retorted Eleanor with a desperate aping of her natural spirit. But she could not meet the young man's eyes; she looked casually up and down the street, rallying her forces — sparring for time, Mr. Dalton would have expressed it! That gentleman in apparent — perhaps actual — forgetfulness of his associate, was leaning over the side of the automobile, in close converse with the chief of the fire-company; the street-car had gone; the ice-market had resumed its activities, blocking the way of the other automobile yonder. All around were the same gross sights, sounds, smells, yet Arcadia bloomed on Amelia Street, and possibly those who, too, have abode there some little while, can comprehend the miracle.

"You look like an angel — you *are* an angel!" Chauncey was saying fervidly under his breath. "I can't bear to see you in this place. You weren't made for things like this. Promise me you —"

And all the while the second automobile, cornered in the rear of Dalton's, after a persuasive honk or two,

was politely awaiting his pleasure. "I believe you had better shut down the engine, Garvin," the little fair lady in the back ordered her chauffeur at last. "We can't move a step. The policeman must have told that man ahead to stop; at least he doesn't seem to have any idea of going on."

The man beside her laughed. "Oh, innocence! Oh, simplicity! That plug-ugly is not of those feeble mortals who are halted by policemen. He's a leader of hundreds. He says to the cop: 'Go!' and the cop goeth! 'Come!' and he cometh! That's Dalton."

"Dalton?"

"Yes. Don't tell me you don't know who the gang-leaders in your own town are! Don't tell me you don't read your own newspapers! Dalton's the business-agent for these striking teamsters, the ones that are making all the trouble with the ice-dealers, you know. Once he was a ward boss — may be still, for what I know — but I daresay this pays better. I met him one time years ago, and I've never forgotten him — he's not the sort of person one forgets."

"Mr. Cook, I think you have met everybody! 'Business-agent'! What a beautifully descriptive term!"

"And how accurate! Here we are, you observe, precisely like everybody else, standing round waiting his orders. If that isn't getting results, if that isn't good business, what is?"

"We could get out and walk to your niece's — it's only a square — and have Garvin come after us —" His exclamation interrupted her. "What is it? Where, did you say? *Oh!*"

They both stared a moment silently. "I wonder who the young man is," Miss Grace was saying, just as Eleanor's glance reached them.

Amelia Street displaced Arcadia with magic-lantern celerity as she waved and nodded and smiled signals of welcome. Whatever Chauncey felt, Eleanor regained common-sense and composure with actual relief, though mingled with her sincere delight at seeing her uncle there was a slight uneasiness. He always saw so much; what had he seen just now? Pshaw, there had been nothing to see — nor to hear either! Mr. Devitt had an exaggerated way of talking sometimes, that was all; it was the Irish strain in him. Uncle Marshall would understand that; it would interest him. And wasn't he with Miss Grace, anyhow, thought Eleanor with sudden satisfaction not untinged with malice. Tit for tat! Uncle Marshall couldn't say anything, she thought — and then burned with inward shame. She was acting like a schoolgirl — and worse! She saw Miss Grace lay a detaining hand on his arm just as her uncle was opening the carriage-door. They spoke together for a minute, and Miss Grace sent Eleanor her doll-like smile over his shoulder as she finally let him go. Something about this little intimate scene set the younger woman on her guard; she wished there had been some way of hinting to Mr. Devitt that it would be the part of social prudence for him to take an unhurried and graceful leave of her. No such idea had entered his head; on the contrary, there he stood, hatless in the broiling sun, looking noble and devoted, not in the least awkward, not in the least embarrassed as a man with more worldly training certainly would have been. And now here was her uncle, cordial, kind,

sharp-eyed, discreet, "horribly humane" and tactful as ever, clasping both her hands, recognising Mr. Devitt with his unfailing courtesy, saying just the right thing, looking just the right way, absolutely the most comfortable companion on earth. Warm affection overcame her. How glad she was to see him again!

"Well, it's very nice to hear you say that, Eleanor; and it's very nice, too, to see you looking so well. The weather seems to agree with you — why, only a few days, as usual, till next week, perhaps. I'm thinking of going out to the Yellowstone, didn't I write you? I'll probably stop again on my way back — but the fact is the house isn't the same without you there. Nell, I miss you all the time —"

"Uncle Marshall, *don't!* I'll begin to weep out loud here on the street —"

"She won't, Mr. Devitt, don't be alarmed!" said Cook, glancing into the other's concerned face with a laugh. "She wouldn't do anything like that in public for worlds. And besides, she's really as hard as nails — no family sentiment about her!"

"I cannot believe that, Mr. Cook," said Chauncey, in his deep, mellow voice. "I, who have seen her in these humble homes, ministering at the bedside of suffering and poverty, I *know* her for what she *is!*"

"Oh — er — quite so!" said Cook, after an infinitesimal pause. He coughed, occupying himself with his eyeglasses. "As I was about to say, when I went to call on Miss Grace and she found out my forlorn state of mind — the bereaved uncle, you understand — why, she insisted most kindly on bringing me down here to see Mrs. Loring. We couldn't telephone you and give notice, Eleanor. The Moreheads aren't in the book."

"Mercy, no! People generally catch me at the Charities."

"She wanted to see you herself, anyhow. And — ah — Mr. Devitt, when I told Miss Grace who you were just now, she — ahem! — she expressed a great desire to make your acquaintance," said the little man, in so unnaturally elaborate a style that his niece shot him a suspicious glance. Impossible to read anything but ordinary civil solicitude in his face, nevertheless Eleanor wondered restlessly what they were up to, he and Miss Grace. She feared the Greeks and their gifts, not without reason, perhaps. Again, she longed to warn Mr. Devitt; he was so simple, so earnest, so serious, his own life had been so hard, that he might not at once understand these people with their assumption of inveterate levity. Their curiosity was not a compliment, he might even find it an offence. Then she remembered with an odd gratification that after all this sort of thing could be nothing new to him; in his public life he must meet with it as constantly as her uncle himself, and very likely Mr. Devitt shared the latter's humorously philosophical views.

At any rate, he was at no visible disadvantage as he went over and was presented to Miss Grace; he was easily the most dignified and striking figure in the group. Miss Grace was beckoning her. "Dinner at eight," she said as Eleanor joined them. "At eight, Mr. Devitt, don't fail us." She addressed her smile to Eleanor. "I wanted to ask you to dine with us to-morrow night, Mrs. Loring, and I've persuaded Mr. Devitt to forget all about formalities and come too. Just ourselves and Mr. Cook, you know. Nobody's in town, and it's too hot to bother about being stiff

and conventional, don't you think? May I send the car for you? It's such a trip to the North Hill."

Decidedly they were up to something! But Mr. Devitt had already accepted; and what if the two — or Bessie Grace, for Eleanor loyally acquitted her uncle of anything beyond a good-natured mischievousness — were as guileful as serpents while seeming harmless as doves? What if they were? She and Mr. Devitt were quite capable of taking care of themselves, Eleanor thought, piqued. By way of demonstrating this fact, she matched her smile and the candidly pleased inflections of her voice to Miss Grace's with finished nicety. "Why, that will be lovely! So delighted to come! At eight o'clock, did you say?"

"Yes. I'm going to have a lavish supply of iced things, Mr. Devitt, just to defy you," said Bessie, audaciously. "There's a man in our cellar who presses buttons, or turns handles or does something with a machine, and presently we have all the ice we want! You wouldn't be so brutal as to deprive us of him, I'm sure — two helpless women, advanced in years. I'm not afraid of you, anyhow."

"Our system is not one of intimidation, Miss Grace," Chauncey told her gravely.

"No?" She considered him with her large infantile blue eyes. "No. Of course not!"

Cook murmured something about being thrice-armed, and appeared to have further trouble with his eyeglasses. There was an instant of embarrassment which everybody felt except Chauncey. Then, as luck would have it, Homer created a diversion by summoning Eleanor unceremoniously.

"Say, I got yer ice, Mis' Loring. Where you want it took to?"

A neighbouring clock boomed eleven, and the people began to disperse. Dalton stood up in his automobile, looking around and behind him and discovering the others with scowling surprise at first; then he grinned. Cook caught his eye, and performed an impressive salute.

"May we pass, Mr. Dalton?" he called out.

"Sure thing!" said Dalton obligingly, trying to remember where he had seen that little fellow before. The car, obedient to his orders, lumbered over to one side, and let the other go by.

"If you took as thorough a look at him as he did at you, you'll know Mr. Dalton again," Cook said to Bessie, half angry, half amused.

"I *did* look at him. I should rather like to ask *him* to dinner. Could it be managed?"

"*What!*" shouted Marshall, outraged. "To dinner! To your house! That thug! That out-and-out blackguard! That —" Words actually failed him momentarily; then he swallowed, and recovered himself. "You don't know what you're talking about, Bessie," he said severely. "The idea's monstrous."

"Of course if you don't think it would do, Mr. Cook —" said Bessie, looking down meekly.

"*Do?* Good Heavens! Why —" Marshall checked himself again. He spoke in a different tone, hurriedly. "I — I don't mean to dictate, of course. I have no business — it was only that you didn't seem to realise — I — I beg your pardon." He got very red and tried to laugh. "I didn't mean to speak to you — your first name, you know — I didn't mean — it slipped out. Miss Grace, I apologise on my knees!"

"Oh, I understand perfectly. Don't feel so — it was nice of you to tell me. Really I was just talking

— I didn't mean anything except that this Mr. Business-Agent looks as interesting as the other man, in a different way. Do you suppose they represent two different forces in the labour organisations? ”

“ If they do, I think I'd back Dalton against Devitt,” said the author. “ I don't know what to make of that young man. Whereas he who runs may read Dalton. What an extraordinary set they seem to be! As if putting all those poor people we saw back there to this trouble, and anxiety, and loss of time and money, and actual distress — as if that served any earthly good end! ‘ *Intimidation* ’!” He chuckled with relish. “ Throwing stones at old Loring is not an effort at intimidation — oh no! It's moral suasion! ”

“ Maybe Mr. Devitt didn't know anything about that, or he might have prevented it.”

“ Maybe.”

“ Mrs. Loring seems to know him very well.”

“ Yes, she does,” said Cook thoughtfully.

“ It will be interesting if we can get her to draw him out.”

“ Yes,” said Cook again, but with so abstracted an air, twirling the point of his close-clipped beard, that Miss Grace discreetly changed the subject.

CHAPTER VIII

NOTWITHSTANDING Homer's reasonable expectations, the strikers' plan of campaign remained unchanged to all appearances throughout that day and the next, though their leaders circulated in automobiles from factory to factory, and more conferences were held. Mr. Loring stood by his guns, the engineers stuck to their posts, the community patiently suffered or patiently devised means to overcome the discomforts of the situation. A break in the weather, Homer's fellow-cynics pointed out, would almost certainly bring matters to a crisis, but nothing of the kind was in prospect, according to the Bureau. With July in full swing, the deadening heat might continue for two weeks, which would give the labour generals ample time to formulate and carry out whatever scheme they had "up their sleeve."

But it was little that one labour-leader, at least, recked of all this during that twenty-four hours! T. Chauncey Devitt, that friend of the toiling masses, that fearlessly eloquent champion of the Rights of Labour, was going about with his head in the clouds. To do him justice, the young man was quite invulnerable to whatever attractions wealth, social distinction, literary eminence and so on, the society of Miss Grace and Mr. Cook might be supposed to exert; was he not T. Chauncey Devitt? He valued this dinner invitation only because he fondly believed it would give him the opportunity he longed for, he ached and prayed for, of seeing his lady alone, of having her to

himself for a blessed moment. There would surely be some stairway, some alcove, some corner of a moonlit terrace — his breath came quick. At last! After his fashion he staged in fancy a hundred scenes with her, away from this shabby environment of Poplar Street, in the setting that became her — and also, he imagined, became himself. After to-night, what might not happen? As he dressed, his clean little room with the lace curtains sweeping the floor, with the pink conch-shells on the hearth, the bog-oak crucifix over the bed, the crocheted tidies and pincushion, the chromo of the Virgin displaying her Sacred Heart that he had won for first prize in the rhetoric class at Saint Xavier's when he was thirteen years old — this chaste, bourgeois interior that his mother tended with such passionate devotion, expanded into a gilded apartment the mere description of which with all its scandalous implications would have taken Norah's breath away. He sang, he whistled, he smiled at himself in the glass, boyishly vain of the slim elegance of his own figure in evening dress, pleased with the fine lines of his white waistcoat that Norah had done up for him with her own hands, delightedly horrified at its cost.

"Fourteen dollars, no less, for a bit of piqué ye couldn't cut a handkerchief out of! But why shouldn't the boy please himself? It's none too good for him!" she said with pride as she and Michael, sitting over their tea and potatoes and cold ham in the kitchen, heard Chauncey carolling overhead.

"'Tis all right for them that has the price," said her husband sourly. "*I* haven't. And I'd look at fourteen dollars a long while before I'd blow it on a white vest, anyhow."

“For Heaven’s sake, Mike, what would you be doing with a white vest? Ye’ve no place to wear such a thing. Our Chauncey’s different.”

“To be sure! He’s a fine gentleman, and look at all he’s doing for the ice-men, and the rest of us, him and Jack Dalton! Jack’s a neat dresser, too. Ye need fourteen-dollar vests when ye work like they do. Next thing the men’ll have to have ’em too. Why not? ’Tis a shame the way we treat ’em, hard-fisted, bullying old skin-flints like Mr. Loring and myself!”

Norah looked at him with the distress and apprehension that his black moods, though now of almost daily recurrence, invariably caused her. She did not understand his heavy irony; she only knew that he seemed to be angered over a trifle — Chauncey’s waist-coat! The fact, taken with the rest of his talk which sounded to her quite wildly incoherent and irrelevant, put into her mind dreadful doubts and fears.

“What for are ye talking about Mr. Loring, Mike? Sure, he ain’t nothing like you, nor you like him. Don’t let the thought of him worry ye. He can’t hurt Timmie,” she said soothingly. “Do ye feel all right the day? Your head don’t hurt, does it? ’Tis the heat; I’ll fix ye something. Ye hadn’t ought to be out on the work all day in the sun, with them dizzy spells like to come on ye any minute. I’ll have to be getting after ye to make ye mind yerself better —!”

“Oh, hold your tongue, Norah, woman, for God’s sake!” Michael burst out violently, as she got up and began to bustle about him. “Leave me alone! I’m wanting nothing, I tell ye!” He pushed his wife away impatiently and got up and got his pipe and went outside. A neighbour sprawling on the steps next door in a similar *négligé* of shirtsleeves and

socks hailed him with the inquiry if it was hot enough for him, to which Mike only responded with a grunt. He sat sulkily dumb, and the other man presently abandoned the attempt at sociability. Norah, wiping her eyes and the dishes, noted with a miserable satisfaction that he accorded every one the same treatment as herself; so that outsiders if they chanced to overhear him giving her the rough side of his tongue as he did just now would think little of it, since nothing pleased him and nobody got a civil word out of him nowadays.

Chauncey came downstairs and paused in the doorway, his tall and clean-lined black-and-white figure looking ludicrously out of place in the hot little kitchen that smelled perpetually of cooking and scrubbing. "Hello, mother!" he said indifferently, and came in and stooped to look over the short white curtain at the window-sash just above the sink. An automobile croaked outside; Miss Grace's big car was drawing up at the opposite curb. All the children on the square congregated around it.

"Is it for Mrs. Loring, I dinnaw?" queried Norah with excitement and respect.

"Yes. Take care, she'll see you!"

Norah obediently drew back, wringing the soapy water from her hands with due attention to his broadcloth, and natty light overcoat. She surveyed her son with happy shining eyes, all trouble forgotten for the moment.

"Couldn't ye find your stovepipe hat, Tim — Chauncey? I put it out on the bed."

"Yes, I saw it. But, Great Scott, I don't want that thing to-night!"

"Sure, I thought all the gentlemen —"

“Oh, you don’t know anything about it. You never go anywhere.”

Eleanor descended the steps, holding her white wrap up about her throat; the children set up a treble piping which she answered in her pleasant, low-pitched voice, fending off the swarming little figures, the little inquisitive, dirty fingers gaily and kindly. The young man had the glimpse for which he was lying in wait; framed in the window of the limousine against its light-coloured linings, her shapely black head, her straight, high profile appeared for an instant like a cameo. The smart footman slammed the door; the car, with a preliminary cough or two, moved off majestically. Chauncey straightened up with a long breath. His eyes fell on his mother standing with her hands resting on the rim of the sink, the Welsbach light overhead bringing out with its strong blue-white glare every detail of her square, dry, active body, her grey hair strained back into a hard little knot, her spectacles, her shining red knuckles; it revealed too a heavenly expression of love and admiration and utter self-forgetfulness, but Chauncey did not see that. It was out of his own exuberant self-content and joyous expectation that he bent and kissed her. “Good-night, Mamsie!”

He had not used the endearing nickname since he was a little fellow, and the tears came again into Norah’s eyes to hear it and to feel his caress, but she held them back valiantly. “Go along now, Timmie! What d’ye want? Gingerbread? That’s how ye used to get it out of me. Well, have a good time! Is it a banquet now? Do ye have to make a speech for them? Ye needn’t laugh at your old mother, ye rascal. Whisht, Tim, go easy by your father, he ain’t

so well to-night! Better not speak to him, without he says something first, I think —” She listened anxiously, but no word passed between the two men, and Chauncey strode off down street, the children scattering before him, and calling out disrespectful personalities from a safe distance; they were not so friendly to him as to the “Visiting Lady” by which title they knew Eleanor rather than by her name.

Going out to the North Hill, one entered a zone of cooler air; and as Chauncey stood in the massive vestibule of the Grace house, he was aware of a fragrant freshness breathing over spacious stretches of turf, and from the clustering trees. With a pleasing calculation the stone arches framed landscape pictures of drop-curtain suggestion — alleys between the trees, the distant curve of the river bank, specked with lights. Inside, in the hall, there was a lofty stillness, broken once in a while by remote voices and laughter. Chauncey remembered Poplar Street, its noises and kitchens and front steps with a rush of aversion surprising in such an advocate of all that Poplar Street represented! Guided in the direction of the sounds, he arrived at a small drawing-room “done” in Chinese yellows and blues, a marvel of good taste, intimate and gracious in spite of its mirrors and lacquer and damask walls and deliberate symmetry of ornament. There sat — on one of the delicate caned satinwood settees with the bouquets and ribbons painted by Angelica Kauffmann in the medallions of its back — there sat little blonde Miss Grace in a white toilette as elaborately un-elaborate as her blue-and-yellow “period” apartment, with a collar of pearls; there was another lady with more jewels and a dress quite as low-necked though her carefully waved

and puffed hair was as grey as his mother's; she reminded Chauncey of the dowager duchesses he had seen on the stage and he braced himself to endure becomingly the chilly survey of her lorgnette. There was Eleanor! She was sitting with her back towards him. And there was the immaculate and perplexing! Mr. Cook, standing in the middle of the floor, delivering some sort of oration, with melodramatic tones and gestures!

"... WHY is it when for FIFTY CENTURIES the MASTER has made the LAWS, that when within this century the MAN has asserted his RIGHT to a VOICE in the enactment of LAWS, the question of FAIRNESS is so often raised . . . ?"

Chauncey thought the point was very well taken, and promised himself to remember it. He was proportionately astonished when Mr. Cook abruptly ended in a burst of irrelevant laughter; and the ladies applauded frivolously.

"Wonderful!" Miss Grace ejaculated. "It sounds just as if it meant something! Is it easy to do?"

"Well, talking is always easier than thinking, you know," said the author, and helped himself to a cocktail. "Though a modest man, I believe with practice I would go far. The first necessity is to bone up a vocabulary of catchwords —"

"Oh, Uncle Marshall, don't exaggerate that way! It's — it's not just!" Eleanor said in a troubled voice. "The labour-men are very much in earnest. You oughtn't to make fun of them. You know I've been down and *lived* among working-people for more than a year now, and I know about them. Of course they

aren't saints, and some of them aren't intelligent or even honest, but —"

"Neither are we! They're just like ourselves, in my observation. Only two kinds of people: men and women. There's no difference between your slum and the North Hill, except —"

"It's not a slum, sir. That shows how much you know."

"Well, it's not a place where I'd choose to 'loaf and invite my soul,' " said Marshall, sipping his cocktail.

"You are afraid your soul might send regrets?" Miss Grace suggested.

"Exactly. We've never been on very intimate terms, anyhow."

Eleanor gave a slight exclamation; she had seen the other guest in the pier-glass opposite her, and rose involuntarily, turning towards him. They gazed at each other; and Cook, catching the look in Chauncey's eyes, after a startled instant, said to himself that he didn't blame young Devitt. Eleanor was splendid to-night; any man might have stared at her too long and perhaps too ardently. The labour-leader himself was rather on the *matinée-hero* order, in point of appearance! Miss Grace tripped forward.

Chauncey was presented to the old duchess, whose manners, to his surprise and faint disappointment, turned out to be perfectly plain and simple; and so far from going over him haughtily through her lorgnette, she gave him a nice old wrinkled hand, and looked at him kindly, if rather searchingly with her bright black eyes. They went in to dinner in another pretty room with casements opening on a terrace, and

sat down cosily at a small round table with a bowl of cottage flowers, snapdragon, larkspur, daisies for the only decoration. Nothing seemed to be luxurious or costly, not even the dinner, though it was exceedingly good. Nobody talked in terms of a hundred thousand dollars a year; nobody said a word to Mr. Cook about his books, and the celebrity himself did not once refer to them! Indeed, Chauncey thought he did not talk at all in a cultured manner; on the contrary he actually used slang freely with obvious relish, and stuck to topics the reverse of literary. It was all somehow a little disconcerting at first, much more so than would have been the frigid pomp for which he had prepared himself. Still, he found them likable; with all their flippancy, they showed a flattering curiosity and interest, and listened with the deepest attention to whatever he said. Mrs. Grace, for instance, wanted to know how he had happened to "go into the labour business," as she quaintly described Chauncey's activities; and when he told her that he had felt the troubled soul of the toilers calling to him, everybody was manifestly impressed.

"I don't think Mr. Grace ever had any trouble with the hands," the old lady remarked; "of course that was a good many years ago. They didn't seem to have strikes in those days."

"They didn't know as much as they do now, isn't that the reason, Mr. Devitt?" said the little author, turning on him a gaze of mild inquiry. "Organisation has greatly improved the workingman in that respect, hasn't it?"

"In every respect, my dear sir! At least, so *we* think," said Chauncey, with becoming modesty. "Even our enemies — that is, those who are opposed

to us —” he interpolated gravely tactful; “even they will admit that under union leadership the condition of the workingman has bettered immeasurably.”

“Then what do they want to strike for *now*?” queried Mrs. Grace innocently.

One cannot prepare oneself against absurdities, so it happened that Chauncey had no answer ready; he gave her instead an indulgent smile. She was really a dear old soul, diamonds and all, and as a matter of fact, no more ignorant than the rest of them; there seemed to be about all of their questions and comments the same kind of baffling simplicity. Mr. Cook asked if they had coloured men in the unions, and being answered no, absolutely wanted to know why not? *Why not!* Chauncey patiently pointed out to him what white men wouldn’t suffer was an association, whereupon Miss Grace naïvely inquired if the coloured men weren’t toilers, too?

“No, of course not! Whoever saw a coloured man toil?” said Cook, while Chauncey was still searching for a rejoinder which somehow eluded him. But with that and some laughter the “labour business” disappeared from the conversation! Chauncey could not have said whether the subject was avoided by tacit common consent, or by some sort of polite jockeying, but it never came up again, though he himself would have been willing, even pleased to continue it; he liked to be interviewed.

Mrs. Loring, he noticed, was rather silent all this while. She was seated across from him, an arrangement which after the first disappointment of not being beside her had been swallowed, he found on the whole more to his liking. The table was small, the flowers unobtrusive, the candles discreetly dim; he

could look at her often and long without imprudence, his position making it natural. He did look. Once or twice as the dinner wore along, he forgot himself, or rather forgot everything but himself and her, and presently became aware with a guilty start that some one had spoken to him, had perhaps repeated the remark, and answered at random, gathering himself together as best he could. Sometimes their eyes met, and with a delirious hope he saw or fancied he saw the beautiful colour sweep slowly upwards over her face. She had on a cloudy black dress; the soft folds of it caressed her maddeningly. There was a tiny mole dotted in the gracious curve where her arm and shoulder joined, that alternately showed and retreated tantalisingly with every movement, under the filmy bretelle. She wore a thread of a chain about her neck with a pendant, flakes of diamonds in a web of silver edged with fairy-like fringes and tassels that hung down and ran together in a point just resting in the sweet valley between her rising breasts. The young man looked and looked until he thought he would suffocate with longing.

"You smoke, Mr. Devitt?" Cook said to him for the third time. Chauncey came to himself with a shock of anxiety; he smiled and stammered and fumbled in the cigarette case Cook was holding out to him, furtively inspecting the little man's face. But Cook merely looked interested in Chauncey and the cigarettes; he explained with a deprecating humour that he couldn't smoke cigars. Everybody was standing up; the ladies moved towards the terrace; in the background the butler was stalking the company, with a tray of coffee-cups and silverware. Another minute and they were outside under the night and

stars, in the comparative safety of the semi-darkness; and so far as he knew Chauncey had not betrayed himself.

Now were due those delicious moments about which he had been speculating rapturously for the last twenty-four hours. Alack and alas for all balked and tormented lovers, the chances for a solitude *à deux* seemed as remote as ever! The wicker chairs and tables were drawn up in a circle; Mrs. Grace apparently had no notion of obliterating herself in the style customary and becoming to her years; her daughter and the author, instead of pairing off decently as Chauncey had expected, sat as if rooted, and kept on with their gay, friendly talk, never allowing themselves to become confidential, never leaving Mrs. Loring and himself out of it for one second, with a positively infernal civility. Nobody made the slightest move to go and look at the moon; nobody suggested that he be shown the house or the grounds or the view. He had the poor comfort of sitting nearer her, and gazing as before. It was an intolerable kind of blissful misery which seemed to have already lasted for years, centuries, æons, and would last, unless, he wildly thought, he went mad and died of love — killed himself at her feet! The idea was rather attractive.

When, however — after another cycle or so! — she arose, and he knew that the evening was over, Chauncey suddenly found in desolation of spirit that he did not want it to end at all, that, since nothing better could be hoped for, he wanted it to keep on this way forever. As he stood by, listening to the good-nights, and mechanically answering those addressed to himself, he noticed with a dart of envy that Mr. Cook was not leaving yet. *He* could stay as long as he chose,

very likely, and have *his* girl to himself, and whisper to her out there on the terrace; that's what people got for being successful authors and little old maids with barrels of money! Cook was of an age to be Chauncey's father, and Miss Grace well-preserved, to be sure, and nice enough, but there was nothing to her. It was ridiculous and infuriating.

"So nice of you to come, Mr. Devitt. I hope we haven't bored you so that you will fly at sight of us hereafter," said the subject of these uncomplimentary reflections. Chauncey was just rummaging for some correspondingly smooth and civil repartee, when she routed every thought from his mind, by adding: "I'm sending Mrs. Loring back and there's plenty of room for you, if you would like —? It must be very crowded in the street-cars a night like this, everybody riding around trying to cool off —"

What else she said, what the others said, Chauncey did not know. He replied somehow, his heart bounding, his head in a whirl. He went and got his overcoat and hat from the silent, well-bred English footman in the cloakroom, who pocketed the prodigious tip Chauncey thrust upon him, and sneered behind his back. He followed Eleanor down the steps; he handed her into the car; and it rolled off, leaving Mr. Cook under the great bronzé lanterns of the carriage-entrance, looking after them with a very queer, dubious countenance.

The author slowly and meditatively made his way back to the blue-and-yellow drawing-room where the ladies of the house were sitting. "Well?" said he, looking from one to the other.

"Well?" echoed Bessie, and watched him subside into a chair. After a silence she said: "Mr. Devitt

is a very striking, unusual, impressive-looking person!"

"Yes. Mr. Devitt is a very striking, unusual, impressive-looking person!" Cook repeated.

For some reason they all began to laugh.

The automobile sped along. Eleanor, though, like any woman, she had ten times greater command of herself than the young man at her side, was tremblingly conscious of his nearness, as indeed she had been all evening, with moments of wonder, of self-scorn, of a sort of ashamed abandon. The presence of the others, instead of a vexation, was to her as that of armed forces and outworks of defence. Now that the enemy was at her very gates, she rushed to her own weapons, assuring herself meanwhile with a desperate hypocrisy that of course she would not yield, she had no idea of yielding — it would be foolish and worse, degrading — her only uncertainty was whether she could hold him in check. His silence was ominous. She began to talk fast and breathlessly about anything, everything, repeating gossip which ordinarily she herself would have been the first to silence. She could not stop to observe *noblesse oblige* in this extremity!

"My uncle and Miss Grace are really exasperating. He has been in love with her for years, and everybody thinks she would have him if he would only ask her. But he won't, because of her money. He doesn't seem to know that the things he has done — his position in the literary world, you know — he's a very well-known man — it never seems to occur to him that that offsets all her millions — I daresay she has millions, I don't know, of course — but anybody can see that they are very wealthy. It would be an ideal match; they

are so congenial — but he simply *won't*, he's too stiff-necked. Such a pity! If he —" She finished with a shrug.

"Are you cold?" said Chauncey huskily; and reached behind her and gathered up the wrap which had slid from her shoulders with the movement. He did not withdraw his arm; his fingers touched her lightly. Eleanor, balancing on some mental tight-rope, decided that it was best to pretend unconsciousness of his attitude. At the rate the car was going, they would reach Poplar Street in a few minutes, and he must perforce return to sanity.

"Oh, thank you, not at all."

"Yes, you are! You are cruelly cold — to me!" whispered the young man, getting his voice with an effort, his sigh stirring the loose waves of her hair. His other hand groped for hers and held it with sudden violence.

Eleanor heard her voice saying, "*Please*, Mr. Devitt —!" while she made no movement to release herself. The devices whose flimsiness and futility she had known all along fell to pieces before the onslaught of her own senses, abetting this male passion. In chaos she grasped at straws; this was not right — she ought to have stopped him — she could not — oh, for shame! She knew very well it was her own fault — well, what harm did it do? — it was not right — what would people say if they knew —!

The car swayed around a turn, and threw her against his shoulder. "At least I am not to blame for *that*!" was the one thought that careered wildly through her, as she felt his embrace, rigid yet quivering, tighten around her, the pounding of his heart, his broken breathing.

“ Oh, Eleanor — ! ”

And then, like a cold wave, the light from the arc lamp at the head of Poplar Street spread over them, and the car slackened speed, already slanting toward the curb! Chauncey released her abruptly, his voice and some semblance of self-control coming back to him with the furious oath he ground out behind his clenched teeth. Eleanor went into light laughter; she did not like him the less for that disappointed profanity; she could not keep herself from glancing roguishly into the young man's white face as he helped her out of the automobile, and she fled up the steps relieved, exultant, reckless. Poplar Street had long since gone to bed, its windows gaping for a breath of fresh air; but there was a light in the Morehead front room. In the one at the back next the kitchen Lutie was asleep with her head on the soiled and sticky red cotton tablecloth, but Eleanor did not know that. She had forgotten Lutie's existence. “ He will have to give the chauffeur a tip, and that will keep him until I get inside,” she thought, fitting the key; “ otherwise he is capable of — ” Of what? She would not finish the sentence, even to herself; and indeed, she had no time for there he was at her shoulder!

“ Let me do that,” he said with authority, taking the key out of her hand. Eleanor submitted in returning panic. On the cramped threshold they had to stand close together. He pushed the door back, and stood against it, looking down at her. Eleanor passed in hurriedly.

“ Thank you. Good-night! ”

But Chauncey had come in behind her. He closed the door gently, and they faced each other in the dim, hot, little room. He came nearer.

“Eleanor! Don’t send me away! I—I *can’t* leave you—I can’t stand it any longer. Eleanor, you won’t make me go away from you *now?*”

His voice was only a gasping murmur, but still beautiful, more than ever so in this pleading. Eleanor stood mute, the turmoil recommencing within her: this was not right—but if he kept on—she would not yield—pshaw, she had yielded long ago in her heart!—this was not right—but what harm did it do?—He was free and so was she, or nearly so—it was not right—what if people found out—

“Do you *want* me to go? Eleanor, look at me! Speak to me! Say you’ll let me stay with you! I—Eleanor—!” He had her in his arms; and bent down and brushed aside the pendant.

The strange thing is that if he had kissed her lips, Eleanor might not have felt the fierce revulsion that followed that caress. But all at once, in a lightning-flash of disgust, she beheld the pair of them as a common man, a common woman, sensually excited, making love to each other or rather barefacedly desiring each other in the old, old, dull animal fashion with the old revolting tricks and gestures, as if neither one of them had a soul or an intelligence, here in a close, ugly hole of a room that smelled vulgarly! She stepped back, freeing herself with an unexpected movement.

“I think—” she was beginning aloud in a cold and well-controlled voice, when some slight noise at the door arrested her.

“Hope you folks had a nice time!” said Lutie.

CHAPTER IX

THE morning papers came out with headlines such as: "ICE SITUATION TIGHTENS UP," "ENGINEERS HOLD PARLEY," etc., but the public, reading with fresh alarms, found the columns underneath to contain, after all, no real news, nothing but the rumours already in circulation, revamped. There were articles with cartoons describing scenes at the ice-depots in humorous vein, and ditto pathetic. T. Chauncey Devitt in yesterday's interview, deplored the suffering among the poor, pointed out that Mr. Loring had a great deal to answer for, and nobly declared that if all means of bringing that gentleman to reason and to a conviction of his wrong-doing failed, he himself would order a carload of ice sent over from Covington — there being no strike on the Kentucky side of the river — for free distribution, paying for it out of his own pocket! "Yeah, he'll do that, T. Chauncey'll do that — in a pig's eye!" remarked Mr. Kendrick and other sceptics, coming upon this item. Elsewhere one read that it was ninety-five by the thermometer in the Government Building the day before; and that the attendance at the ball-park had been rather light, owing to the low standing of the home team which was being brought down still more by the efforts of the Black Sox; yesterday's game made the latter's third consecutive victory, having been won by Loring's "lucky wallop in the seventh."

Eleanor had not seen these reports when she started

out a little late, but fresh and vigorous in defiance of the heat, to find Homer Morehead and begin her rounds. The boy had been invaluable in this pinch, he was so quick, reliable and ready to assume responsibility. As usual she did not have far to go in search of him; Homer was sitting on the front doorstep engaged in reassembling the pair of skates from his box-cart lying alongside.

"Well, Homer, good morning! I think we had better go around first to old Mrs. Hanke, and see what she wants —"

But Homer, who ordinarily responded with so much alacrity, did not budge. "Nothin' doin'!" said he, and continued operations on the skates with a stubbed penknife which he employed as a screw-driver.

"What is that? What did you say?"

He looked at her sidewise, pursing up his lips and wagging his head with an expression at once knowing and regretful. "'S all off, Mrs. Loring! I told you how it would be. I knew they'd spring something before long," he said, and returned to the skates, with a squint along the rollers to see that they were in alignment. The significance of his employment and of the dismantled cart began to emerge, to Eleanor's dismay.

"Do you mean we can't get ice any more?"

"That's about it," said Homer. Having completed the job to his satisfaction, he set the skate beside its fellow, and stood up, snapping the penknife shut and thrusting it into his pocket with an air that expressed finality. "At least there's going to be slews of folks that won't get none. You gotta go to the fact'ry and *then* they won't let you have none, without you got a doctor's cert'f'cate there's sickness in the house.

I guess that lets you 'n' me out, Mrs. Loring. *You* can't beat it out to a fact'ry every time somebody wants ice, let alone you can't get doctor's cert'ficates for all of 'em; and *I* couldn't lug it all that way for you, anyhow."

Eleanor listened to him blankly. "Are you *sure*, Homer?"

"Try for yourself and see!" Homer advised her with detachment. "I did."

"But they're making ice still? They've got the ice?" Eleanor asked; and as he nodded a gust of blind resentment shook her. Of all selfish, criminal follies this was the climax! It made no difference who was to blame; they were all to blame! "What are they thinking of? Has *nobody* any sense? People *must* have ice — they *must* have it! What does Mr. Loring say?"

"He ain't nothin' to do with it I don't b'lieve," said the boy. "Somebody said he was sick — laid off with that arm broke, you know. Anyhow, the strikers got fellows in charge at all the ice-plants, and they've sprung that cert'ficate business like I was telling you. They're making it go all right, too! I s'pose they claim it don't hurt well people to go without ice, and they're willing to let the sick ones have it, ain't they? What you going to do 'bout it? Course the hospitals and institootions they're all getting it right along, 'cause they're cram-jam full of sick people. As long as it's that way, the strikers can claim they ain't anybody got any kick to make. Dalton's pretty slick."

"Does — does Mr. Devitt know?" Eleanor asked uneasily.

"Sure thing! He goes round to all the fact'ries every day, you know."

Eleanor stood still, confronting her own helplessness with her old familiar flaming rebellion; but she had herself under stricter discipline than in Mrs. Maranda's day, or rather realised that there was nothing tangible, as it were, to rebel against, no one individual of whom to make a target. For the first time in her life she was without recourse; an appeal to Mr. Loring (which, oddly enough, was her first impulse) she dismissed as futile; if he had made up his mind, nothing she could do or say would bring him to alter it. Besides, to tell the truth, Eleanor found her view of old Amzi's conduct somehow distorted by her profound respect for him; in this quarrel, he might not be wholly right, but she was possessed by an ungovernable conviction that he was so nearly right, that she could not but applaud him for "sticking it out." The strikers must undoubtedly be right, in a measure, too, but strive as she would she could not look upon them as equally trustworthy. This Dalton man, now — but she immediately averted her mind from Dalton. Mr. Devitt — her blood quickened in spite of her — Mr. Devitt was too impractical, too visionary, too one-sided to apply to in such a crisis. After last night, how could she go to him? Let him come to her — it burned through her that she was thinking of him now only as a lover, not as a power, not as a leader any more. He was a young man who had kissed her — and this morning Eleanor forgave him that kiss.

"Lina's raising the roof," Homer observed, casually. "I was gettin' ice right along for her to fix that dope she feeds the kid with. Well, she ain't the only one."

No, Lina was not the only one. Eleanor thought

of the mothers and babies all over the city — she could have named a score in her own district — with another stab of impotent anger and pity. Oh, the fools, oh, the senseless stubborn brutes that men could be! But it was a waste of time to stand here manufacturing denunciations. “You’ve been *everywhere*, did you say, Homer? Well, then, it’s my turn to try,” she said determinedly, and set off without much idea of where to go or what she meant to do, but finding that merely to be in action restored her self-confidence. After all, Homer was only a boy, with a boy’s limitations in the way of resource and personal influence; *she* was not to be so easily defeated.

There was no ice at the engine-house, but she had expected that and went on undismayed. The druggist at the corner had gotten it on his representations that some medicines could not be kept in this weather without it, and that his establishment was “next thing to a hospital anyhow,” he told Eleanor; of course he had none for sale; the soda-water fountain was tinkling merrily. At Schlochtermailer’s the assistant meat-cutter said that their supply of ice from the day before would only last till noon; he didn’t know what they’d do after that; Heinie had gone out to see about it — and Gee, wasn’t this thing fierce, though! Eleanor started off again; there was the usual stream of all sorts of vehicles through the streets carrying ice; she overheard people relating the devices by which they had gotten it, the other devices which had failed. No one believed that this new trial would continue long; there were too many ways of “beating the game”; any doctor would give you a certificate, no matter whether you had sickness in your family or not. Anyhow, if this thing kept on,

pretty soon people would get used to going without ice; they didn't have ice in summer thirty or forty years ago before ice-machines and refrigerator-cars were invented, and nobody worried about it. "Sure they didn't worry! They just died! Died off like flies, particularly the children and the feeble ones, there're statistic-sharks that have got the figures to prove it. Must have been lots of fun!" sarcastically retorted the man to whom the above argument was addressed. Eleanor remembered those comparative tables of mortality, too, with a sinking heart.

She came to the tenement where the Tom Moreheads were living and went in, exchanging comments and condolences with other tenants as she climbed the stairs. Some of them had a little ice, and their poor, tumbledown, unsavoury boxes were crowded with the meat, milk and what-not that they were trying to keep for less fortunate friends. The lank, worn, overworked women sighed and exclaimed and wondered how long the trouble would last, but not one of them shared, or at least expressed, Eleanor's furious rancour. They accepted this unnecessary and cruelly undeserved suffering as they accepted the other hard circumstances of their lives, as if it were, like the July heat, an act of the Power above which nobody could complain about, or provide against, or avert!

Tom Morehead came to their door with his puffed eyes, his tallowy face, with his bare feet in a pair of ragged slippers, his dirty undershirt clutched about his neck; but he was sober for once, and smiled weakly at sight of Eleanor. Through the door she had a glimpse of the place unkempt as usual; and

from the room beyond an incessant thin wailing penetrated her ears like a needle.

"W'y, Mrs. Loring! Lina, here's Mrs. Loring come to see you!" Tom said with a miserable affectation of heartiness. Inarticulate but savage sounds answered him from the inner apartment. "Lina, she can't come just now, I guess — she — she's busy. I don't guess you got time to wait," said Tom, hesitating, with uncertain eyes. But he fell back resignedly as Eleanor walked in. "We ain't got fixed up yet — we wasn't looking for comp'ny so early. Have a chair, Mrs. Loring — you must be tired — all them stairs —"

Eleanor cut short his nervous stammerings. "How is the baby?"

"W'y, she ain't so well —"

"Have you had the doctor?"

"W'y, no, ma'am, we ain't yet. We — we're kinda in trouble," said Tom, lowering his voice with an uneasy glance towards the other door. "You know how it is, Mrs. Loring —?"

"Nobody has any ice — yes, I know. But if you could get the doctor here, he'd give you an order for it on the baby's account, and then you could get it, even if you had to go out to Elmwood."

"Well, we — we ain't got nobody to send —"

Eleanor controlled her temper; the spectacle would have astonished Mr. Cook, and perhaps enlightened him as to what and how much she had learned this past year. "Nobody to send? Can't you go yourself?"

"W'y — I — I —"

"Haven't you any money?"

"No'm — that is — I got fifty cents, on'y —" he looked towards the door again — "on'y Lina — she — I give it to her, 'n' she — she —" His eyes appealed to Eleanor desperately.

Lina appeared violently in the doorway, with the baby in her arms. "Never you mind, Mrs. Loring, don't you waste no time on *him!*" she said in a high, grating voice. "*I ain't. I'm through with him! I'm through with that lazy, stinking drunk! W'at you staying round here for? Didn't I tell you to clear out?*" she screamed, advancing on the man. "*Ain't I told you I'm through with you, you —!*" She flung an epithet at him like a stone.

"Say, look out, Lina, you — you don't want Mrs. Loring to think — to think nothing —" Tom expostulated; he began wretched apologies to Eleanor. "Lina, she's all tired 'n' played out; she's real nervous, you know. Say, *don't*, Lina! Say, you ain't asked Mrs. Loring to set down —"

But Lina was beyond conventions. "You lemme alone! I guess I know w'at I mean. You get outa this, Tom Morehead, or I'll *show* you, you —! You and your old ice-strike! You can just *take* your old ice-strike and go to hell with it, that's w'at you can do! Look w'at you done to my baby! Look w'at you done to my baby!" She grasped the poor little creature to her in a paroxysm of maternal passion dreadful to witness, it was so like the helpless anguish of a she-animal over its sick or wounded young.

The husband turned to Eleanor with a despairing gesture. "That's the way she acts right along. I can't do nothing — they ain't nothing I can do. She keeps blaming it on me, and I ain't done nothing. W'y, my God, w'at *could* I do —?" he whimpered.

"Better go away a minute, and let me talk to her," said Eleanor, gently, sick at heart for both of them. She put him aside and went up to the woman. "Listen to me, Lina —"

All at once Lina's fit of rage and terror broke down in a storm of sobs; she collapsed on the littered floor, moaning and rocking herself to and fro with the crying baby huddled in her arms. "Oh, Mrs. Loring, her food's all spoiled! It's all soured! It won't keep a minute without we got some ice! The milk won't keep nor nothin'! She'll starve to death — she'll die — she'll die! Oh, what'll I *do*? What'll I *do*?"

"Listen to me!" said Eleanor again; and her strong, firm, kind voice actually quieted them. They looked at her in a fascination not untouched with fear. "I am going to get you some ice. Your husband must go with me to carry it, and we will go straight out to one of the factories, at Elmwood, or wherever is nearest, without waiting to see the doctor, or to get any certificate or anything. I will make them give me some; they will as soon as they know who I am. Now you must give Tom his money, and we will go."

"Mrs. Loring, I won't, I *won't*! I won't let him have no money for to go and get soused on —!"

"Give him the money!" repeated Eleanor steadily. "You must make your own money go as far as you can, before you take any from the Charities. Give him the money, Lina. I will see that it is spent right."

The other obeyed her like a child.

"Now come with me — no, never mind *your* clothes, that's of no consequence —"

"I don't know how I'll make out to carry it —"

"You can fix one of those slings of cord, the kind they carry watermelons with — I've seen dozens of people carrying ice around that way," said Eleanor, mastering her impatience. "Come now!"

On the street Tom held back again. "Mrs. Loring, where you going? You going to Elmwood?"

"Yes. Well?"

"W'y, I — I —" said Tom, wavering. "I don't know — Mr. Loring, maybe's got it in for me, you know, 'n' I — I —"

"If Mr. Loring is there, he won't do anything to you. There is nothing to be afraid of," said Eleanor, keeping the contempt out of her face and voice by a strong effort. He followed her on the street-car meekly.

CHAPTER X

ELEANOR had only been at Elmwood once or twice since that other hot day years ago, before she was married, before anything had happened in her life, as it seemed to her now. In this time the fields and half-finished streets had become a well-settled suburb, built up in rows of small houses, and there were many more shops and factories. The macadam road that the Shamrock Construction Company was building that summer had been altered beyond recognition almost throughout its entire length by paving and cross-streets, but in the neighbourhood of the ice-plant it reappeared in its original aspect like the rest of the scenery in that particular region. There stood the building, corrugated iron walls, tower of water, weighing-platform and all; there was the weedy, dusty esplanade, the same all-but-dead ailanthus trees, even the scummy runlet of sewage in the bottom of the ditch that she remembered. The machinery was in motion, smoke rising from the stack. An elderly policeman with grey hair was sitting on a bench improvised from a plank and a couple of kegs, in the exiguous shade. There were numbers of men lounging about singly and in knots — so many, in fact, that, gathered together, they would have made a good-sized crowd. They looked curiously at Eleanor, and some of them knew Tom and spoke to him. These conversations were carried on in guarded undertones, and whatever the

burden of them, they had no reassuring or encouraging effect on Thomas, whose unwholesome face presently took on a look of even greater perturbation than before. He addressed Eleanor huskily, pulling at her sleeve as she picked her way towards the little office-stoop.

“Mrs. Loring! Say, Mrs. Loring!”

“Well?”

“W’y, I — I — I don’t b’lieve we’d better try to get no ice here,” whispered Tom in agitation, his eyes darting fearfully to both sides of him, behind him, here, there and everywhere but at her, or straight ahead. “We’d oughta try some of the other places, I b’lieve.”

“But we’re *here* now, and we must get the ice and get back to your wife as soon as we can!” argued Eleanor sharply; and then some new expression on his features moved her to ask: “What is the matter?”

“Mr. Loring’s here an’—he’s in the office — an’—an’ they’s some of the men here — that fellow I was talking to he says — they say —”

“Well, I should like to see Mr. Loring. Mr. Loring’s the very person I want to see. Why are you so afraid of him? I’m sure Mr. Loring doesn’t care a thing about you one way or the other. Even if he did, even if he was very angry with you, he wouldn’t do anything to you,” Eleanor said in utter exasperation. She told herself that she preferred his wife with all her fury to this abject creature; no such cowardly fears would have swayed Mrs. Tom, or any other mother for that matter.

But Eleanor was mistaken in her estimate of Tom’s motives; for once in his life, he was not thinking

altogether of himself. "I don't mean him — Mr. Loring — I don't mean just *him* — I mean all of 'em — all them men. Don't you see they ain't selling no ice? Don't you see they ain't nobody but kinda roughs round here? An' just that one old orf'cer — *he* couldn't do nothing, if they — if they was to start somepin'. You'd oughta not be here, Mrs. Loring — honest, you'd oughta not be here!" Tom mumbled imploringly.

"Pshaw!" said Eleanor, all her stubborn pride and spirit roused. She glanced around imperiously. "Nothing's going to happen. That man was just trying to frighten you. Look, there's some one coming to get ice now. Nothing's going to happen."

Tom looked at her, at the approaching automobile, at the closed office-door, at the groups of men, at the solitary policeman, and finally at Eleanor again; the sweat broke out on his forehead, but, let it be said to his honour, he did not desert her. Knowing to the full the risk they ran — a risk undreamed-of by Eleanor herself — knowing it well, Tom did his poor best to be a man.

"That ain't nobody after ice. That's Devitt," a man near them said, as the car drew up. The men began to close in towards it; Chauncey stood up; there were two others in the automobile with him, but they remained seated. The office-door opened, and Mr. Loring came out on the stoop, with his left arm in a sling; a curious kind of rumble ran through the crowd at sight of him; and then there was a bar of silence.

Eleanor had started, and crimsoned, and involuntarily retreated a step or two, suddenly feeling that she did not want Chauncey to see her; of course they

must meet again, sooner or later, but not here, not now, not until she was better prepared. She vehemently hoped that he would miss her in this crowd; and then, glancing around once more, realised in a startled instant, that she could hardly escape notice, being the only woman there, that these men were indeed a sinister-looking set, as poor Tom had warned her, that, in fine, something *was* going to happen, after all!

“Mr. Loring!” Chauncey said, his voice carrying easily across the space that separated them. “Good morning, sir!”

Old Amzi looked at him and said: “What do you want?”

“Mr. Loring, you understand without doubt the arrangements that have been made for the purchase of ice? That is to say, that none is to be sold except in case of sickness or a physician’s written — er — guarantee?” said Chauncey, rolling his syllables slowly and splendidly.

“I haven’t made any such arrangement,” said Mr. Loring.

A formidable sound arose from the crowd, but died down as Chauncey began speaking, with a fine gesture. “Mr. Loring, I entreat you!” he said in his deep, moving voice. “Don’t stand in the way of our endeavours to bring about peace and mutual goodwill. Above all, don’t inflict more suffering on the public. I have just come from the mayor; his honour knows that we are peaceable and law-abiding citizens. But it is unwise to provoke people by — by unreasonable stubbornness, and by — er — a show of armed force,” said Chauncey, glancing at the policeman. “We have patiently tried to convince you that our

demands are just; we deplore the violence that has resulted from your previous —”

Mr. Loring made a movement with his free hand which had the effect of arresting the other's fluent and resonant speech. “You want me, as I understand it, to let some of your men come here and sit in my office and check off my sales, and dictate to me who I'm to sell to. That's what you've been doing in the other places, so I take it that's what you expect to do here.” He paused, and as his eyes rested on them the two men in the car rose, making ready to descend. “Well, I refuse. I won't allow anything of the sort,” said old Amzi strongly and deliberately, watching them.

One of them hesitated, but the other, grinning, pushed open the door and jumped out, and his companion, after a second, followed him. They moved towards Mr. Loring who, from his elevated position, eyed them undisturbed, though others drew together in their wake, and ominous noises seemed to be coming from all sides. His attitude was much more confident than that of the labour-leader, who stood in the automobile watching, too, but with an indefinable effect of confusion or uncertainty. All the while the machinery throbbed steadily, the water purled, the pneumatic hoist screamed at regular intervals, and a switch-engine with some cars ground along the tracks behind the factory, the train-crew craning from their stations to see what was going forward.

Chauncey finally called out something which was lost in the increasing racket; there was a kind of irresolute movement in the crowd of men. Somebody shouted at Mr. Loring a question or perhaps a threat which was unintelligible to Eleanor, but old Amzi

answered at the top of his lungs and most unequivocally. "I don't take orders from any of you. You've tried to wreck my place, and you've tried to kill me; you can try again! But I'll see you all to —"

The hooting of the freight-engine drowned the last words; it was reinforced by a fusillade of honks from an automobile-horn, and as the train drew over the crossing, this second automobile came into view charging over the tracks and directly at the mob at such a rate of speed that they gave back involuntarily, opening out a little. It halted within fifty feet of the porch. The hood was folded back, so that there was visible inside a tall, brawny young man with a light suit of clothes extremely well-cut and well-fitting, with an undershot jaw, a heavy layer of sunburn, and a strong scowl the permanency of which was indicated by two upright creases between his quick little eyes; these last, without any semblance of haste or effort, comprehended the place in one glance. In similar style leisurely and composed, yet without a single wasted movement, he got up, opened the door, stepped out. He addressed Mr. Loring.

"'Lo, Dad!"

"'Lo!" said Amzi One, allowing his son a brief glance.

"Some crowd you've got here," commented the latter agreeably. Mr. Loring grunted.

The younger Amzi shoved his straw hat a trifle back, thrust both hands into his trousers pockets, planted his feet apart, and in this easy posture again surveyed the scene. He might well have been disquieted by it, but no trace of any such emotion, or of anything resembling anger or excitement showed on his prize-fighter countenance; he looked amused, if

anything, but there was a quality in this amusement which was hardly satisfying; it suggested a jolly ogre. Of the forty or fifty men there was probably not one who did not know who he was and his reputation for competent savagery. They stood undecided, everybody looking to his neighbour for the next move; the policeman tardily advanced; and in the instant Amzi Two spoke.

“Having a picnic, hey?” said he. And hereupon, scarcely stirring from his place, he reached out with a motion astoundingly quick yet calculated like a wing-shot, like the unerring pounce of a cat, plucked a man from among those nearest, twirled him about, and picked a revolver from somewhere in his garments, all in the twinkling of an eye. The half a dozen immediate witnesses had no more than gasped when the thing was done; those on the outskirts did not know what had happened; the news travelled out to them as they saw the glittering arc of the weapon’s flight as Amzi Two tossed it towards the policeman, who, taken a little aback, fumbled, dropped, and then retrieved it gallantly.

“Good boy, George! Sign you on!” said Amzi Two approvingly. Then he spoke to the late owner of the revolver squirming ineffectually in his grasp. “Tut, tut! Little men shouldn’t carry guns. Why, you might have hurt somebody, I saw you go to pull it, you know — Now, now, it’s not a bit nice to talk that way. That was a real bad word. Why, I believe you’re trying to hit me. Oh, I see! You’re trying to hit yourself. Why, look at the little man trying to shove his own face in with his own little fisties!” said Amzi Two, obliging the other to perform this act very vigorously. “Right on the

smeller! Ain't he cute, boys! *Ouch! Look out!* Don't hammer on that one eye all the time! Paste the other once in a while. See, like this! Oh, watch the little man trying to eat dirt! All right, you can eat dirt if you want to. There now —!"

It did not last thirty seconds; the mob gazed upon it spell-bound. Mr. Loring from his rostrum began to speak once, but on some second thought checked himself, looking on with the rest. Young Amzi straightened himself, and sent around his formidably jocular glance.

"Anybody else looking for anything?" he inquired.

It appeared that nobody else was looking for anything.

"Say, Mr. Loring —" the policeman began.

"All right, officer, run him in! The charge is carrying concealed weapons," interrupted Amzi Two promptly. "Concealed weapons — get that?" He dusted his hands lightly together. And now his eye lit upon the other automobile as if for the first time. "Why, look who's here! My old friend Tim Devitt — *Chauncey!*" he trolled, in a raucous falsetto. "How do, *Chauncey!*" An hysterical snigger ran through the crowd.

Chauncey had been standing in the car, all his faculties a muddle of indecision, conscious helplessness, conscious inability to think, and something very much like fright. He did not lack physical courage, but as a matter of fact he had never been in such a position as this before; he had addressed crowds, he had never been called upon to handle one. Dalton was the man for that — Dalton or some other equally potent and ruthless business-agent. On a sudden it had been made hideously plain to him that his oratory was

powerless to prevent these men from doing all that Mr. Loring defied them to do; he saw the place laid waste, old Amzi's dead body under the ruins, himself standing by, incredibly and horribly futile. A hundred sounding phrases with which he had been wont to "sway the multitude" as he fondly imagined, swept through his mind and in one moment of terrified enlightenment he knew them for the idle stuff they were, and himself for a mouther of cheap and empty catchwords. Had he been a genuine fanatic, riot and bloodshed would have mattered nothing to him; but Chauncey was not genuine; except as directly concerned himself, he had never done an hour of genuine thinking in his life, or felt a single genuine emotion. Now in the mill-race of events, he was without one rock of principle to cling to; he could only remember Dalton and the newspapers.

It was not altogether to his discredit that the relief with which he perceived the danger to Mr. Loring pass, was seasoned with a furious mortification. If he had ever really had any ascendancy over this crowd of men it was gone — gone beyond recall, snatched from him by this big, swaggering, jeering bully in whose hateful presence Chauncey found himself standing to-day, as of old, dumb and out of countenance — maddeningly dumb and out of countenance. Set at naught, dispossessed with contemptuous ease by a man whom he told himself was his inferior yet whom he knew he could not cope with — it was, let us allow, not altogether monstrous that Chauncey wished Mr. Loring's salvation had been postponed, or had come about some other way. The trouble was that young Amzi's advantage was not wholly one of mere muscle; he was playing the grand

rôle; the other young man recognised the fact against his own will, and hated him the more for it.

"Mr. Loring," he began, stammering, getting himself together with tremendous effort. "You come here into the midst of these toilers — you come here — er — with the presumption of your class, riding in your automobile —"

"That's all right, I pay for my automobile, Tim — *Chauncey!*" Amzi Two broke in, uttering the last word in the same high and affected fashion which brought a guffaw from the audience this time. "Who pays for yours?" he demanded with sudden roughness. "Hey? Why, the union does. That's what they're striking for, ain't they? Sure! Here's one of 'em now!" With a motion as unexpected and as supremely dexterous as before, he jerked forward the unlucky Tom Morehead whom some current had swept near. "Here's a striker! Look at him! Ain't he a bird? Where's *your* automobile, bo? Hey? You haven't got any? Want to help pay for Chauncey's, don't you? Yeah, like hell you do! Want to hand the shuff his, too — don't forget *that*, Clarence!" He wrested away the half-dollar which the other was clutching, and flipped it into the car where it fell at the chauffeur's feet; the latter hesitated a second then picked it up, grinning. Everybody laughed again.

"Shut your mouth, Montmorency, or I'll shut it for you!" Amzi Two wittily admonished his victim, jogging him to and fro to the vast diversion of his comrades. "Hey? You wanted *ice*? You wanted *ice*? For the *baby*? You've got a nerve!" ejaculated Amzi Two, holding the whining, struggling wretch at arms'

length easily, and surveying him in ferocious mock admiration. "You've got a nerve coming round here to buy ice for the *baby*! Why, say, Clifford, you're *striking*, you know. *You* don't want ice! You've got to save your dough to pay Chauncey. He does such a lot for *you*! My, my, ain't you ashamed?" Still holding the other he turned again towards Chauncey. "Say, here's one of your men going back on you. Wants to buy ice for his *baby*! Can you beat that?" He affected to examine Tom as if the latter had been some species of noxious insect. "God d—n you, did God make you?" said Amzi Two genially. "Better let him go, Chauncey! S'long, Claude! Bye-bye!"

He flipped Tom away with scarcely more effort than he had put forth for the half-dollar, and the crowd hooted servilely. "Anybody else want anything?" Amzi Two queried once more.

No, nobody else displayed the least desire for anything, unless it might be a change of scene; for sundry members of the gathering were now unobtrusively retiring from it.

"Make 'em all go 'way, *Chauncey*! Make all those rude men go 'way!" Young Amzi adjured their sometime leader. "Go 'way yourself!" He flapped a huge hand at Chauncey lackadaisically. "You make me so tired!"

Chauncey, in a lamentable fluster, attempted to rally his late followers. "I will see Mr. Dalton — I will take to him — Mr. Dalton shall know of this outrage —"

"That's right, Chauncey, see Jack Dalton!" shrilled the tormenter. "Get him to learn you an-

other piece! Tell Jack to come himself next time, or send a man! Why, Chauncey, you look kinda mad! Don't get mad at me —!"

For Chauncey, in a spurt of rage, jumped to the ground, and strode towards him with clenched hands. "You —!" he choked out. It was an act of sheer folly, as he knew, but he could not have restrained himself, had he believed the gallows would be his portion.

Alas, alas, something much worse than the gallows awaited him! "Oh, my, don't hurt me, Chauncey, I'll be good!" bawled the other in burlesque terror. And, deftly evading Chauncey's unskilled fists, he seized him by the collar and waistband in the posture detestably familiar to their college days. "Walk Spanish!" roared Amzi Two with horrid laughter; and, painful to relate, Chauncey did walk Spanish, ungently assisted by the other's knee, back to the car — into the car! The chauffeur inexplicably had it in readiness; it rolled off in a tempest of ignoble merriment; and presently the crowd somehow had melted clean away!

Amzi the younger strolled over to the porch where his father was still standing. The two men looked at each other for a moment, in embarrassment, quite without words.

"Well, son, you stood 'em up in great shape!" said old Amzi at length.

The other made an inarticulate sound. He settled his belt and trousers, and drew down his hat to shade his eyes. "Gee, this sure is one hot day!" he remarked, squinting at the horizon.

"How'd you happen to come out, Amzi?"

"Well . . . I . . . I had a kinda hunch . . ."

"Uh-huh," said Mr. Loring. "Will you be out to the house this evening?"

"Why, no, I guess not. I guess I'll keep right on at the hotel with the rest of the fellows. It's more convenient, you know."

"Uh-huh," said the older Amzi, again, without disappointment.

"Does that hurt you much, father?"

Loring senior wagged his head negatively. "Nump! Some fever in it, of course, but it's getting along all right, the doctor says. Take about six weeks, he says. I can waggle my fingers a little, see? I thought at first it was lucky to be my left arm, but, by George, it's pretty near as much trouble as if it was my right! Funny how much you do with your left hand without noticing it."

"Sure! You've got to use it all the time."

They both gazed absently about in every direction except at each other. "Old place looks just the same," said Amzi Two.

"Yes . . . I thought they were going to rush you one time, Amzi. I started to holler at you to look out, and then I thought to myself, better not! He's holding 'em all right, I thought to myself. Better not mix in till I *have* to! So I didn't."

"Hungh! That bunch!" grunted the younger man in immeasurable scorn.

"Well, they might have rushed you any time, you know *that*," his father insisted. "Only you got 'em going. They didn't have the nerve."

"Hungh! That bunch!" said Amzi Two again. The next instant his face changed; he stepped back involuntarily with a loud ejaculation.

"Hey?" said Mr. Loring alertly, bracing himself

for some new encounter. His eyes followed the other's. "*Eleanor!*" he shouted out.

Eleanor came up to them, paling and flushing, excited, her eyes very bright. She looked at Amzi Two in stark admiration for that physical superiority which, when all is said, is man's strongest appeal to woman; she was proud of her husband, strong, arrogant and fearless. At the moment Amzi Two might have done with her what he chose; but he had no idea of doing anything; he merely stood and stared. His father who had twice the younger man's intelligence and power of observation did indeed glimpse dimly something of Eleanor's feeling; the staggering thought visited him that she had come there seeking Amzi to "make up"! He dismissed it on the instant, as being totally foreign to her character. But why was she there at all? The idea that she might have witnessed the scene just passed, rendered it all at once intolerably brutal to old Loring whose theories about a woman's place and functions were those of an earlier and perhaps more fastidious generation. "Good *Lord*, Eleanor!" he uttered in a shocked voice. "What on earth —?"

"'Lo, Nellie!" Amzi Two managed to say, simultaneously.

"Well, Amzi —!" said Eleanor. She began to laugh hysterically.

Amzi Two scowled, eyeing her doubtfully. Having a well-founded distrust of Eleanor's moods he was not certain, in the present instance, whether she was laughing with him or at him, but thought it most likely to be the latter. "What're you doing round here anyhow?" he demanded almost threateningly.

But Eleanor had already ceased to laugh; in truth it was at herself that she had been laughing, at certain ironies of the situation unguessed by Amzi Two. She replied to them both, explaining concisely. "The man's name is Tom Morehead — you remember him?" she said to Loring senior at the end.

"Yes. But — where is he?"

"I don't know. I think he ran away. He's the same man you took the money from," Eleanor said to young Amzi in a matter-of-fact way. "It doesn't make any difference about him. I'll get the ice, if you'll let me have it. I've ever so many poor people that I'd like to get some for. I can send a wagon, or get it downtown some way."

There was a short pause. Old Amzi, looking at the pair in front of him, waited a reasonable while for one or other of them to act; then took command himself. He was a business man.

"All right, Eleanor. You go into the office and wait a minute. I'll see about the ice for you. Well, now, Amzi —"

"I guess I'll be moving, Dad," said the other Amzi. "Huh — er — good-bye, Nellie."

"Good-bye," said Eleanor.

She went into the office, and after a moment Mr. Loring came in and sat down at the desk, and drew the telephone towards him, frowning a little at the inconvenience of having only one hand to use. "Just a minute!" he said to her. "I'll call up Garry, and have him come out and take you downtown in the machine. You can take some ice to this sick woman and baby — whoever you've got on hand — right now, and send for whatever you want later." And having issued his orders, he hung up the instrument, and

turned towards her. "Funny about that Morehead fellow running off!" he said with a laugh.

"Well, I really ought not to have made him come here," Eleanor said. "He knew that you wouldn't let him have any ice — a striking employé! I might have known it myself, but I —" Mr. Loring's expression halted her.

"Not sell him any ice? Because of his being on strike?" old Amzi exclaimed. "What put that into his head?"

"Why, isn't it so? Wasn't that what Amzi meant? I thought you would let *me* have it though — I was sure you would let *me* have it anyhow —"

Mr. Loring sat and looked at her in perplexity and actual concern. "Eleanor," he said at last. "You *know* me. You can't suppose that I would refuse ice to anybody. It's a question of women's and children's lives — it's a question of common-sense and decency. Morehead can have ice like anybody else. I'm not going to make any distinctions. Why, that's what's made most of this trouble — I mean my refusing to knuckle down to a set of fellows like Dalton and that blatherskite Devitt, and letting them tell me what I'm to do. What Amzi said? Why, Eleanor, didn't you know that Amzi was just bawling 'em out? He wanted to scare 'em, and he did scare 'em — he scared 'em blue! That was all that talk was for. Didn't you *know* that?"

"Why, no, I — I thought he was in earnest —"

Old Amzi gave her another thoughtful survey. "You weren't frightened!" he said.

"*Me?*" cried out Eleanor, ungrammatical in her astonishment. "*Me* frightened? Why, no! There wasn't anything for *me* to be frightened about. At

least, I don't think so — I never remember to have been frightened in my whole life, so of course I can't tell!" she added naïvely.

It made Amzi One smile. "No, you're not the kind to frighten easy," he remarked. "You're honest. But do you know what was the matter with 'em, Eleanor? I'll tell you. If they had really believed they were doing right, Amzi couldn't have bluffed 'em — he couldn't have made 'em back down that way. But there wasn't a man in that gang of hoodlums and jailbirds that didn't know they were all nothing but trash. That Devitt fellow, spouting round about the rights of labour and all the rest of the stuff, he don't believe in what he's saying — he's just going over what he's learned off like a piece out of a book — like one of these phonograph records. You could hire him to talk on any side. That's the kind he is and it's the cheapest kind on earth."

"I think I knew he was a sham all along," said Eleanor to herself rather than to her companion. But old Amzi took her up promptly.

"Hey? You mean the minute he began to talk this morning? Why, of course you'd know he was a sham — anybody with as good sense as you've got!" he declared with a warmth of approval that humbled her more than the most biting reproof. "Of course *you'd* be onto him right off. Plenty of people aren't, though. Plenty of people think a man's saying something because he's stringing words together! Don't make any difference how he lies or blows, or what kind of slush he talks. But you put a man like that up against the real thing, and see what happens! *You* saw this morning. He don't know what to do! He just wants to get out of it! If there's anything

like responsibility or accountability going to be put on him, why, he's scared stiff! He runs off with his tail between his legs. It wouldn't make any difference how wrong or crazy he was, if he solidly believed he was right, you couldn't scare him. You can't scare an honest man, Eleanor —"

' The telephone rang, and Mr. Loring turned to it, fumbling one-handed with another grimace of impatience. "Yes, this is the Elmwood Ice-Plant. . . . Yes, this is him talking. . . . Oh, why, how d'ye do, Mr. Schlochtermajer! . . . Yes, sir. . . . Yes, right along. . . . Why, any quantity you say. . . . All right, we'll take care of that for you. . . ."

CHAPTER XI

NOW indeed the daily press had cause for thankfulness; every editor and every reporter on the staff might throw up his hat and rejoice. No event of so much local importance as the abortive attempt upon Mr. Loring's Elmwood fastness had occurred since the Court-House Riots thirty years before. To be sure, nobody knew exactly what had happened. Not a word could be got out of old Amzi, though his house, the Elmwood office and all the other offices of his "chain" were under fire all day long. T. Chauncey Devitt was at home sick — he had tonsilitis — he had been ailing for the past week, and the doctor had finally ordered him to bed — he was not at the Elmwood factory at all on the morning in question, and therefore knew nothing about what had taken place — his condition was serious and he positively could not see anybody; it was the first time in his career that he had refused an audience to a journalist! Business-agent John Dalton was sick, too — he was in the hospital — he was out of town — he was anywhere you choose, but wherever that might be, he was unapproachable. Amzi Loring Two was found easily enough at the Hotel Preston with the other members of the Black Sox team, but not in a communicative mood; he was a person to make his moods respected. Nobody would talk, yet it was erelong obvious that somebody must have talked! "BACKBONE OF ICE STRIKE BROKEN!" one

paper announced. "WHERE ARE MY WANDERING BOYS TO-NIGHT? T. CHAUNCEY'S UNION GETS AWAY FROM HIM!" recited another most flippantly and moreover falsely, let us hope. But by far the most popular sentiment appeared in the *Observer*: "EEE-YAH! AT-A-BOY, BUTCH!" vociferated this organ of public opinion; and fifteen thousand people went out to see the game that afternoon.

In the stuffy seclusion of his bedroom, Chauncey read these and other items of information or misinformation in angry bewilderment. He was like a child who should have hurt himself with his favourite toy. He could not understand what it was that was happening to him, except that for no adequate reason he was all at once being made the butt of indecent ridicule by the very same public which for years had admired and applauded him. Everything that had taken place at Elmwood could have been explained; Chauncey felt that he could have explained that disaster perfectly had he been allowed to; *he* would have talked, he would have filled the air with words, but upon Dalton's command he must hold his tongue.

To tell the truth, the latter's admonitions to silence were delivered with unpleasant force and with a choice of language which even his protégé at moments felt inclined to resent. "What in hell you been doing?" was the form in which Mr. Dalton's first inquiry was cast when he called Chauncey to the telephone, upon receiving a report of the morning's happenings from some discreetly obscure lieutenant. And after listening a minute or so in profane impatience, he slammed the instrument shut, and posted up to the Devitt house, alarmingly black of countenance. However, he heard Chauncey through this

time without interruption, grimly chewing a cold cigar; and sat and surveyed him afterwards for so long a while in the same boding silence that Chauncey was relieved when the doorbell rang and Mrs. Devitt came timidly to the room with news that a gentleman from the *Herald* was downstairs wanting to see —

“Well, he *don't*! Tim don't see him, nor anybody else, see?” growled out Dalton, forestalling Chauncey with a look that sent the young man back to his chair as effectively as a blow. “Tell 'em he's sick — tell 'em he's dead — tell 'em what you d—n please!” He shoved the cowed woman out of the room with the door as he closed it.

“But if I could talk to him a minute —” Chauncey expostulated. “You don't *know* — everybody will get the — the wrong impression — if I could talk to them, I could —”

“Say, don't you think you've about done enough talking?” inquired Dalton, turning a gloomy eye on his junior; and he proceeded in a few brief but pithy sentences to set forth his own opinion of what Chauncey had and had not done besides talking, with incidental references to his career and capacity couched in terms calculated to scorch the very woodwork of the room! “Yeah, you'll *talk* and you'll *explain*, you — boob!” he snarled at the finish. “You will, hey? Not a — word! You hear *me*? I don't *know*, don't I? You can bet your —” he specified distinctly what Chauncey could bet — “you can bet I *do* know *now*!” He surveyed the other in sardonic admiration. “By —, you got such a front you had *me* bluffed part way! But not any more!” He abruptly changed his tone to one of scoffing argument.

“Why say, you’re *through*! You’re a dead one, only you don’t know it. There’s a lot of dead men going round, playing they’re alive, but believe *me* they ain’t! Know what killed ’em? Why, they got the laugh, same way you’re going to. There ain’t any way’ll kill a man quicker and deader than getting the laugh on him. That’s something *you* didn’t know, did you? Well, this’ll learn you, if there’s any learn in you —” He pungently expressed his doubts on the last point.

Chauncey sat dumb under the other’s scornful invective. Dalton had been angry with him once or twice before, but never to such a pitch as this. Yet it seemed to the young man that this was the time of all others when he had been conspicuously blameless! How could he have foreseen what was going to happen at Elmwood? Or what could he have done to prevent it? It was all as much Dalton’s business and Dalton’s fault as his; Dalton was treating him like a criminal when in reality he was a martyr, not even permitted to say a word in his own defence. He would have attempted again to set the facts before Dalton in their proper light, but the latter had evidently made up his mind not to listen; he *would* not understand. There was nothing for it, Chauncey felt, but to resign himself.

“Well, what do you think I’d better do? Do you think I had better stay here? I might go somewhere — to French Lick, you know, or somewhere,” he ventured.

Dalton got up. “I don’t give a —— where you go,” said he, walking deliberately to the door.

“I only asked because I thought I wouldn’t — that

is, you wouldn't — that is, I guess I'd better not go down to the office yet awhile?" said Chauncey.

The other paused with his hand on the knob, wheeled slowly, and gave Chauncey a long look; he smiled peculiarly, then drew an exaggeratedly gentle sigh. "I got to hand it to you, Tim," he said, wagging his head; "I thought you only had me bluffed about half. Honest, I did! But you — why, you put it all over me!" said Mr. Dalton, in sad surprise. "Yes, sir, I was sure you had *something* up there where your hat fits — I never run across a fellow before that didn't have *something* there, and I thought you had, too. I never got real wise to you till this minute." As before, he changed his tone with sudden roughness. "Say, you're *fired!* F-i-r-e-d! I told you you was *through*, already. Now I'm saying it again; you're through, done, dead!"

"You — you mean you don't want — I'm not to — to have my position with you any more?" Chauncey faltered in abysmal confusion.

"He's got me!" said Dalton, apostrophising the ceiling. Then he brought his glance to rest on Chauncey again. "You're on, Tim! By — I begun to think I'd have to call your mother a —! Come to think, though, I ain't sure you'd have quit on your own hook even for *that!*"

He went. Chauncey sat for a long while among the fragments of his pinchbeck world. He did not know that it was pinchbeck; he had had no enduring revelations. He was troubled mainly by the discovery that he must reconstruct his scheme of life, leaving out two such fundamental elements as Dalton and the Federation. One cannot be a labour-leader,

or a leader of any kind without somebody to follow one; even Chauncey could perceive that anomaly. It never occurred to him to doubt Dalton's word or power; he knew he was indeed "through" if Dalton said so. His mind revolved aimlessly about the idea. It was not until some time later that he remembered there were other problems besides the Labour problem, about which an orator of his unusual gifts might be equally eloquent with equal success æsthetically and — ahem! — commercially. There are just as good fish in the sea, in short, as ever were caught. He had already been sought by magazine editors, by lyceum bureaus and caterers to newspaper syndicates and the popular-lecture platform. Eventually, as we all know, T. Chauncey Devitt arrived at a distinction in these fields which eclipsed even his earlier performances. He is a great man.

At the moment, however, Chauncey's outlook was very bleak. It was not until he had remained housed and gloomy, denying himself to every one, for two or three days, that the pose gradually assumed a dramatic aspect to him, like that of Napoleon in defeat. There was comfort in the thought. The melancholy remoteness of his bearing increased to such a degree that his mother felt herself in a fair way to go distracted with anxiety. Norah had no conception of what had taken place; she knew only that Timmie was in trouble and that Mr. Loring and Jack Dalton, bad luck to them, were somehow at the bottom of it. She faithfully turned away the newspaper-men who supposed the vagueness of her answers to be intentional and credited her accordingly with profound guile! Poor Norah was afraid of them, afraid of the neighbours, afraid that Chauncey was going to pine

away and die of some mysterious ailment, afraid of Dalton, and to cap all afraid to tell her husband a single one of her terrors. Mike was so changed these days.

"Dalton was here the day," she did indeed venture to say across the supper-table, while still smouldering with the recollection of his ruffianly words and manner to her. It's himself would give Jack Dalton a fine thrashing if he knew about it — or at least he would have once upon a time, she thought. Chauncey had not resented it, but that was because he couldn't have seen or heard anything of it at all, the poor boy was that miserable!

"Was he? Did he want me?" said Mike, looking up quickly. Norah's resolution broke down before some menace in his eye or movement; she had not the courage to betray Dalton.

"No, 'twas to see Timmie," she said, pouring the tea with a shaking hand.

"To see Tim?" her husband repeated. "It'll be my turn next, likely. What for did he want to see Tim?"

"Ah then, Mike, I don't know; how should I know?" said Norah piteously. "The boy's sick. He won't eat nothing — that is, just a bit here and a wee sup there. They done something to him; what is it, I don't know —"

"Oh, Tim's well enough. Don't be a fool!" said Michael, pushing his chair back with a grating noise. Norah looked after him despairingly through her tears. It had come to this, then! With a husband and a son in the house, she must submit to be sworn at and hustled by Jack Dalton. It seemed to her as if his shadow lay black on their hearth.

At last, within something less than the nine days popularly assigned to such matters, the hue and cry died down. Reporters ceased to call on Poplar Street; ice-wagons were seen rolling about the thoroughfares as formerly; no more queues at the engine-house; no more private foragers dashing frantically to and fro. It was supposed that some compromise had been effected, but as usual nobody knew exactly what had happened. Chauncey went to French Lick over the week-end, and by the time he got back the public was moving serenely on its way, exhibiting that amazing facility at forgetting certain occurrences which is equalled only by the amazing tenacity with which it remembers certain others. The young man's spirits revived; he began to think about Mrs. Loring, to wonder what she had been thinking about him all this time. A merciful fate spared him the knowledge that Eleanor had witnessed that Elmwood scene; he had not seen her. Now Chauncey felt that no power on earth or elsewhere, not even Jack Dalton, could keep him from confiding all to her; he longed ardently to explain to Eleanor; his version was the only true one; no matter what she had heard, she *must* hear him, *must* believe him. She would understand; she would sympathise because she—he thrilled again to remember the thrill of that night.

He had to curb his impatience. The blinds of the Morehead front bedroom were down, the plants in the window-boxes frizzled to a crisp; and his mother, reciting the neighbourhood chronicle, casually let drop the fact that she had not seen “that Mrs. Loring” for some days; maybe she was away on a vacation, or making a visit to some of her swell friends.

“Ye never had time yet to tell me about them peo-

ple ye went out to take supper with that night — that time when Mrs. Loring went, too, d'ye mind?" said Norah. "I suppose they was all dressed up like queens. A man wouldn't know anything about what they had on, though. Lutie says that little Miss Grace ain't nothing to look at, for all her money —"

Chauncey let her run on; he himself was thinking of the last time he had seen Lutie, when she had been (with good reason!) even more unwelcome to him than usual. He would have liked to know just how much Lutie had seen, how long she had been eaves-dropping. She would talk, of course — but after all, thought Chauncey securely, what if she did talk? Everybody knew how Lutie Morehead felt about him. She might gossip her head off, tell lies nineteen to the dozen, or merely tell the truth, and people would only laugh in their sleeves and egg her on.

He saw Lutie repeatedly, but always at a distance, as she went to and from her work, and had it been anybody else, he would have thought she was avoiding him; she seemed to be always in a hurry, and always looking in the opposite direction. At any rate, he would not have gone to her for information as to Mrs. Loring's whereabouts; for that matter, he could not make any inquiry anywhere except in the most circumspect fashion. The only person to whom he might have applied openly was Homer Morehead junior, and that young gentleman had disappeared too. There was no mystery about Homer, however; Chauncey heard that he had gotten a job, on probation, but there was little doubt that he would "make good." He was running an elevator in the building where Mr. Kendrick's office was; Mr. Kendrick had recommended him. He was getting fifteen dollars a

month, and had gone to live down-town at the Y. M. C. A. Home for Boys, or some such place. Homer had risen several degrees in the public esteem since these events; one heard on all sides that he was a 'good boy, a steady boy, and nobody's fool either; every one had always prophesied a successful future for him!

In the end Chauncey got the first authoritative report in a random conversation with Miss Schlochtermailer. It seemed that Mrs. Loring had gone out to her old home on the North Hill to be with her sister, who was crippled or blind or something; Miss Schlochtermailer was rather indistinct — "But I bet Mrs. Loring just does *everything* for her — I bet she's just an *angel* to her! She's the loveliest lady I ever come in contact with!" was the stenographer's enthusiastic verdict. Chauncey listened with an indifference not wholly feigned; his private opinion was that the sister was a nuisance, and that Mrs. Loring might be an angel, but emphatically not Miss Schlochtermailer's kind of angel.

It was the very next morning that Eleanor returned. Chauncey, lurking behind his curtains, beheld hers widely drawn; and, with the familiar exquisite shock, caught a glimpse of her within. It was only ten days, yet it seemed to him an age, since they met, since they parted! He said to himself that he had forgotten how beautiful she was — he had forgotten the turn of her waist, the carriage of her head, the proud sureness of her step and movements. While he gazed she vanished; she must have left the room. He waited for her to reappear, and in the interval noticed idly that there was a taxi at the curb, and an express-wagon a little farther along. But

between them, in easy conversation with the chauffeur, what figure was that, what neat and carefully dressed figure of short stature with a cigarette, with eyeglasses, with a close-trimmed iron-grey beard? It was her uncle; it was Mr. Marshall Cook — *absit omen!* — as Chauncey might have said if he had remembered a word of his classics, or understood a word while he was studying them. For the sight of the author somehow operated most depressingly on Chauncey's high-beating heart. What was *he* doing here? A pair of expressmen whom he had not seen enter the house emerged cumbrously from it, with a trunk between them — her trunk! They came down the steps and loaded it on their wagon; and drove off unconcernedly, just as if there were no such thing as tragedy in the world.

She was going away; she would not be here on Poplar Street any more; that much was plain, but where would she be? With the invalid sister, with Mr. Cook, with — Good Heavens! — her husband? Chauncey felt that he could not endure the uncertainty; if he let this moment go by, in what difficult and devious ways, with what harrowing delays must his pursuit be continued! Prudent or not, he must find out now, at once, even if the knowledge should be torment. He ran downstairs, and snatched a hat from the rack, and went out, starting briskly down street, with a poor pretence of not noticing what was going on across the way, which he converted directly into another poor pretence of surprise and awakening interest. He looked, slackened his pace, looked again, halted. Eleanor was standing on the threshold.

She saw him and nodded. Chauncey crossed over,

striving not to appear too eager. Mrs. Loring was not at all nervous; there seemed to the excited and self-conscious young man something almost formidable in the composure with which she stood and waited for him, buttoning her glove. Then he remembered that women are notoriously better actors than men. He went up to her, beginning to put out his hand and withdrawing it awkwardly when she made no corresponding gesture; her hands, indeed, seemed to be too busy with the gloves or what-not. She smiled on him, however; Amzi Two could probably have told him something about that smile, but Chauncey had never seen it before; it arrested him like a dash of cold water in the face.

“Ah, Mr. Devitt!” said Eleanor, smiling, arching her fine eyebrows in amiable recognition. Cook started and turned around, puckering his forehead to focus his near-sighted gaze, a little dazzled by the sunlight.

“It’s Mr. Devitt, Uncle Marshall,” intoned Eleanor correctly in her pleasant, well-bred voice. “You remember him, of course.” She paused. “Mr. Devitt, the labour-leader.”

There were no words to characterise her manner — or, at any rate, Chauncey could think of none. It was the quintessence of delicate and bland offence, yet one inferred that she would not take the trouble to insult him. He stood before her at first incredulous, then aghast, then suddenly in a boiling turmoil of disappointment, mortification, sheer rage. He wanted to swear at her; he wanted to call her vile names; he wanted to scream out: “Why, curse you, I’ve held you in my arms; I’ve kissed your breast; I could have had you for nothing — you would have

let me; you wanted me to! What do you mean by looking at me and talking to me like this, as if — as if —” the quality of her hatefulness eluded him again; he could not put a name to it; he could only seethe inwardly. No consideration for Eleanor withheld him from some such outburst; it was himself that he was thinking of; he had his own face to save.

And all the while here was that simple-minded little fellow, her uncle, spreading civil conventionalities over the situation in complete unconsciousness of its uglier aspects — so Chauncey thought. He braced himself to an attitude of similar sophistication. Polite inquiries passed. Yes, Mrs. Loring was going away for a while; she and her sister were going East to spend the rest of the summer with Mr. Cook in a cottage he had taken down on the Cape; always cool there, you know. Always so hot here. Every one needed a change now and then. Mr. Devitt himself had been away for a few days. What a delightful evening they had had with Mrs. and Miss Grace!

Cook handed his niece into the cab.

CHAPTER XII

IF Cook had a guess at what had passed between his niece and the man they left standing on the curb, or at the significance of the last scene, he sagely kept it to himself. For that matter his guess would have gone no farther than that the young fellow yonder had lost his head over Eleanor, who could not help being attractive to men, and that she appeared to have found it necessary, finally, to "set him down hard"—such was the vulgar colloquial English Mr. Cook privately and sometimes publicly employed. The episode did not greatly interest him; during this visit, which had reached the unprecedented length of ten days, he had been busy and troubled. In spite of a way of life which is supposed to engender selfishness, particularly in bachelors, Marshall had a sense of duty, which of late had been disturbingly active. It had not ceased to press upon him the conviction that something ought to be done for his niece, Fanny.

To tell the truth, after twenty-four hours of Mrs. Maranda in her new rôle of guardian angel to the blind or all-but-blind girl, there were moments when the mild little man of letters could have gone berserk with anger and pity. It went to his heart to see the poor thing feeling her way about the house, or sitting drearily idle, she whom he remembered for years back so willingly and tirelessly industrious. In her own way Fanny had once been almost as pretty and al-

ways as dainty as Eleanor; he thought there was a horrible small pathos in the spectacle of her now with her hair untidily or unbecomingly dressed, her blouse buttoned awry; she could not see herself; her hands had lost their deftness. She was barely thirty-one; nobody ever dies of being unhappy, all romance to the contrary notwithstanding, Cook thought bitterly, so Fannie had before her a lifetime of this same humble and uncomplaining wretchedness. Her affliction was enough in itself; but, to top that, she must support the childishly unconscious brutalities of a thoroughly good woman. Twenty times a day Cook, flinching himself, saw Fanny flinch beneath her aun't barbarous sympathy, only paralleled by her barbarous fun. He actually shut himself in his room, and shook an accusing fist at space. "How can such things be?" he cried out. "Satan himself couldn't have invented anything more monstrous. If Juliet were only *bad*, if she did what she does knowingly out of malice or meanness, why, one could get even with her — one could pay her back cruelty for cruelty — one might have at least that much savage satisfaction. If she were only *bad* — but, good Lord, she's nothing but a fool! Nobody can get even with a fool! Nobody can do *anything* to a fool!"

It was there and then that Marshall made up his mind about the something which must be done for Fannie. He said afterwards that he would recommend the same experiment to any novelist for the profitable study of character afforded by the ways in which the three women received his plan. Fannie was a mixture of anxious distress at having given him trouble, and of a timid hope and delight touching to witness. Eleanor's gratitude blazed; nothing pa-

thetic about *her*! She seized upon his project, expanding and embellishing it with subordinate projects of her own, which differed from those of most enthusiasts by being in the main practicable. "Do it? Of course we can do it!" she proclaimed superbly. "We'll pay you back whatever you advance to start us housekeeping, Uncle Marshall. Fannie and I couldn't be satisfied otherwise. We couldn't take that much from you just as a gift." She overrode his objections royally. "I know where I can get just the apartment we need — four or five rooms — that will be big enough for us, and have a place for you, too, when you come to make us a visit. We'll have everything so simple that Fannie will learn how to get around and manage it in no time while I'm out or at the Charities. Oh, Fan, *won't* it be fun? Our own home, only think!" Eleanor threw her arms around the other's neck and kissed her, and embraced Cook too, bursting into laughter a little wildly with tears in her eyes at the little man's embarrassment. "Poor Aunt Juliet! I'm sure she doesn't think of it as a *plan*. It's more like a — a *pogrom* to her!" she wound up, laughing again.

Indeed, poor Mrs. Maranda was surprised, aggrieved, finally confounded. She frankly did not know what to make of Marshall, what to make of the girls! Had they not lived for years under her care, and how could they possibly get along without her? Had she not always made a sweet, lovely home for them even in the face of Eleanor's lack of appreciation, even after poor dear Fannie became a helpless burden? She could not conceive why they should want to go off and set up in a place by themselves, all *to* themselves, or how their uncle ever came to sug-

gest such a thing. Think of how it would look to outsiders! Think of her ill-health! Think of the expense to her of maintaining a separate establishment! Mrs. Juliet wept, adjured, complained, had hysterics, went to bed and sent for the doctor — all to no purpose. She saw with stupefaction the preparations going forward unhindered; she might cry her eyes out, she might stay in bed till doomsday, for the first time in her life nobody would heed her. It was a rout, a débâcle. Before this Marshall had sometimes frightened her with his immovable suavity, his speeches that sounded so harmless, yet so often left her with a sense of defeat and insecurity; now she trembled before him, before the invincible and invulnerable male to whose decision all femininity must bow as to Juggernaut — so Mrs. Maranda had been trained to believe in her mid-Victorian youth. Cook knew the attitude of mind; he allowed her to remain in it!

“It appears that I am a brute!” he said to himself with a grin. “I insist that Fannie and Eleanor shall have this little outing down on the Cape with me this summer, and then that they shall have a home of their own, irrespective of what Juliet wants or has arranged. I am the Man of the family, and when I put my awful foot down, who dares dispute me? Even the time-honoured device of going into ladylike tantrums has no effect. I am a ramping, roaring, masculine monster. *Bien!* That settles it. Now we all know where we stand!”

So the packing-up and moving, the bargaining and ordering, all the countless odds and ends were presently attended to, mainly by Eleanor herself. The Poplar Street expedition was put off to the last,

whether intentionally or not she could scarcely have told. Upon her return in the fall, her work would be in another quarter of the city. She had said to Miss Penry that she would like something new.

"There isn't anything *new*, Mrs. Loring. You ought to know that by this time, after a year of this charity work," said Miss Penry with good-humoured impatience. "It'll be the same kind of dirt and foolishness and ignorance and worse; same kind of people, good and bad and betwixt-and-between. No use to expect anything else."

Eleanor regarded her thoughtfully. "I don't expect anything else," she said. "I've gotten all over my notions about the 'deserving poor.' I've found out there aren't any 'deserving poor.' But I've found out another thing that's a great deal more important, and that is that it doesn't make any difference whether they are deserving or not; they've got to be taken care of whatever they are. Good or bad, what's the odds? We have them on our hands, and we *must* look out for them. Only I want a new set to look out for."

She smiled, though Miss Penry was sober.

"All right. A person does get tired of being in one place all the time," said the latter. "And when that happens I think you sometimes lose your influence with the people. They get tired of *you*. All right, Mrs. Loring, I'll get 'em to shift you. You might take the East End this time. That's way off at the other side of the city, and you'll find a whole new outfit of drunks and defective children, and good-for-nothing wives and poor diseased things — same as usual, but with different names and faces." She stopped, then added candidly: "Do you know I was

sure you'd get discouraged and quit! But I don't believe you will, after all. You've got the right idea."

The morning of their departure came around at last, and Poplar Street could no longer be avoided. When Cook volunteered to go with her, Eleanor found herself rather guiltily glad of his support; nothing could happen with her uncle standing by — if she should meet some one, for instance —

But they met nobody at first; nobody was in sight when Eleanor went up the familiar steps. Lutie opened the door, starting back and glowering at the visitor.

"Oh, Mrs. Loring! Quite a stranger, ain't you?" she said with an effort, achieving a loud neigh of laughter. "I hear you're going to leave us."

"I'm going to take a vacation first, and then —"

"I'm on mine now. I guess you didn't expect to find *me* around home — not that you'd be coming to see *me* anyhow," said Lutie with biting emphasis. "Your things is all upstairs just the way you left 'em. Nobody's touched 'em, nor took any, I guess."

Eleanor went up, dogged by the remembrance of the other's wretched eyes. For Lutie's vindictive speech somehow rang hollow; she was not a jealous termagant; she was only hopeless, only unhappy. The perception smote Eleanor with a sense of guilt which she would willingly have exchanged for the worst of physical pain. It was in vain that she argued with herself that it was not her fault that the young man had been attracted to her; that she had consciously done nothing to win him away from Lutie; that, indeed, he never had been Lutie's. It was in vain that she told herself what a poor creature he was; she knew that that was nothing to Lutie; Lutie

could not be made to see him as he was, and if she could, it would not matter to her. She loved him. Eleanor had stolen him and with the best will in the world could not give him back. Both women knew that, the one with what longing and despair, the other in what self-contemning humiliation.

Eleanor walked about, gathering up clothing and trifles with unheeding hands. There was not much to do. She thrust everything into her trunk and locked it mechanically, and went to call the expressman. Lutie came up the stairs and met her on the landing.

"Ready?" she asked. And then, drawing her lips into a smile: "Say, your gentleman friend's down there. I guess he seen something was doing over here, and came across to find out."

Eleanor made no pretence of not understanding. "I don't want to see him," she said, recoiling involuntarily.

"Shouldn't think you would with so many people round," said Lutie meaningly.

"I don't want to see him," Eleanor repeated. "I am going away—I want to say good-bye to you, Lutie—"

"Why, *sure*, of *course*! Of *course* you only come because you were just crazy about me, and just plain *had* to say good-bye!" the girl retorted. Her eyes evading Eleanor's chanced to fall on the reflection of their two figures in the mirror. There stood Eleanor, lithe, erect and cool, with her high head, her fine hands, her toilette that seemed to the other so inimitably "stylish"; and here Lutie, thick-set, corsetless, heavily pretty in a soiled dressing-sacque and a skirt that dragged down unevenly at the back. It was a

cruel comparison. All at once Lutie's eyes filled up, overflowed; she tried to speak, but broke into hard sobs instead, leaning against the door-post with her arm across her face, her whole body shaking. "Oh, Mrs. Loring — oh, I don't see how you *could* — I don't see how you *could* —!" she moaned.

If Eleanor had done any wrong, she expiated it all in that moment of anguished pity and self-abasement. "Lutie, don't, *don't!*" she whispered, her own voice breaking. "I didn't mean to — I know I ought not to —"

"'Tain't *that!* I ain't blaming you!" the other gasped incoherently between paroxysms. "You can't help being pretty — and lovely clothes — and everything — you can't help it. It ain't your fault *that* way. Only it ain't *fair!* You got it *all* already. You can't help it, I know, but —" she began again inconsistently; "I didn't think you *would*, Mrs. Loring — I don't see how you *could* —"

Eleanor stood before her an instant helpless, tortured; she had an impulse to fly, to escape any more of it, but acted on another and better one. She went up to the poor thing, and put her arms about her, and Lutie, surrendering, wept on the enemy's shoulder and eased her heart, and Eleanor comforted her. "Lutie," she said in a voice strong and steady now as the support of her kind arms; "Lutie, it's all over — it's over for good and all. After this one time I will never see him again. I won't be so very far away, of course, but I promise you I will make it so that he and I shall never meet again. Then presently he will forget me — forget how he felt about me — forget everything's that happened —"

"Yes. Seems like that's the way men are —"

they're always forgetting," sighed Lutie. They kissed each other good-bye.

So Eleanor descended, and presently gave Mr. Devitt his *cong  *, after the manner described. She would have done so in any event; she believed that she despised him for a cheap, meretricious fool; the trouble really was that she had been a fool herself in company with him — *that* was the unforgivable and unforgettable thing! But the spectacle of Lutie undoubtedly edged her more keenly. She went from the scene with the sensation of having done a neat job superlatively well. After a while of this placid looking upon the work and seeing that it was good, she returned comfortably to the affairs of the moment. "How much time have we? I haven't anything more to do, but women always worry about making a train, you know."

Her uncle looked at his watch. "Oh, easily enough, barring accidents. Even if this little tin kettle should break down, we could take the cars —"

At that precise instant the little tin kettle, turning a corner, jerked to a standstill with such undue violence as to throw them backwards and forwards in their seats. "Oh, my prophetic soul!" Cook jolted out. "What's up?"

They suddenly found themselves in the skirts of a gathering crowd; a policeman loomed in the middle of it, other policemen were arriving, there were heads at all the windows, vehicles stalled here and there, rising hubbub.

"Ambulance coming, sir," said the driver. "I can't get through here. Go round the square?"

"Yes — if you can turn —"

Even that slight man  uvre had to be executed

slowly and with caution. During the backing and filling, Cook spoke out of the window to the nearest pair of shirtsleeves. "What's the matter?"

"Accident!" said the other concisely. He nodded towards a towering façade on the corner. "Up there in the Kremlin Building."

"Ah? What was it?"

"Don't know. Man hurt — or killed maybe. They're taking him out now." He stood on tiptoe, craning, then settled back disappointed. "You can't get near enough to see anything."

Cook and his niece went on down to their train which left at noon; and it was not until the next day, loitering through a late breakfast, that they found in the Boston morning-papers what it was that they had been within a few feet of witnessing. The Kremlin Building! They both remembered the spot, the delay, the excitement; and Cook, reading down the column, ejaculated in horrified and disbelieving surprise:

"Good heavens! Why, it's not possible! *Devitt!* It's not *that* Devitt — not the young man — it's his father. It says here the 'Shamrock Construction Company,' so it must mean the older one. Yes, Michael Devitt! I remember him well! Why, you can't believe it! He must have gone suddenly insane. One can't help thinking that people who do things like that are insane — temporarily, anyhow. Poor old Mike! Well, 'Home he's gone and ta'en his wages!' Nobody ever will know what it was all about now. Nobody can ever say with certainty."

In fact, there had been only one eye-witness, and people pointed out that poor Hilda Schlochtermailer was next door to crazy herself from the shock, so that

her testimony was not absolutely reliable, even when the coroner managed to hold her down to plain statements. It took a deal of time and trouble, for she would go wandering off into irrelevancies, in particular about Jack Dalton, whom she accused of responsibility for what had happened and much else besides. She never had any use for him — he wasn't any good and everybody knew it — oh, yes, he and Mr. Devitt had always been friends — that is, she supposed they began by being friends — but it looked to her like Mr. Devitt was just afraid of Dalton now, afraid of having any fuss with him. Dalton had got thousands of dollars out of him; she knew *that* — well, maybe not thousands, but *hundreds* anyway. It was just plain robbery, same as if he'd cracked a safe — Dalton ought to have been in the Pen long ago — and so on and so on. They had to bring her back to the point again and again.

Sifted out, what she said was that she had been in Mr. Devitt's employ as stenographer and office-girl for nearly four years. No, she had never noticed anything queer about him; often he would be kind of worried and down in the mouth, but he never acted queer; she was sure there wasn't anything the matter with him. He was the *niciest* old man — not what you'd call refined, but real nice feelings about everything. She never worked for anybody she liked better.

She said that she went to the office that morning as usual; it was Room 912, the Kremlin Building. They only had one room, with just her desk and his. Old Mike didn't need much of an office for his business, you know. He wasn't there ever, except mornings for a couple of hours; they would go over the

mail together, and he would kind of tell her what to answer. He wasn't any hand to dictate letters or things like that; as soon as she got to knowing the business pretty well, he left a good deal of that part of it to her, while he'd be out on the work. She kept the books, and the men's time, and did the banking — regular office work. They kept the cash in Mr. Devitt's drawer, but both of them had keys to it, and often she'd pay off the hands Saturday night — whenever Mr. Devitt asked her to. She never had thought anything of his having that gun — that revolver — in the drawer with the money. Lots of men were careful to have a gun somewheres around handy, if they had a lot of money to take care of. He had said to her that it was in case of trouble, because the men were a rough lot, and she might holler her head off, when one squint at that gun right under her hand would *fix* 'em. No, Mr. Devitt had not showed her how to load it; she was scared to touch it; she believed there were cartridges or shells or whatever they use in one of the drawers of the desk, but she couldn't say. No, she didn't know whether he had loaded it that morning, or whether it was loaded already. Yes, that was the revolver — and oh, please, mister, *please* —!

She became very hysterical and incoherent here, and it was some time before they could quiet her enough to proceed with the inquest. At last she went on to say that she had opened up the place and done some work already when Mr. Devitt came in; he seemed the same as usual; he spoke to her about a bid he had put in for the cement work on the new viaduct. It was about half past eleven when Dalton came. She did not know whether Devitt was expect-

ing him or not. It was nothing out of the way for him to drop in at any time. When she saw him she just thought: "Well, I bet he's mad about the way his old ice-strike fizzled out; maybe he didn't get his rake-off. I bet he's going to start something with Mike's men just to get even, and show everybody he's in the game still. That would be just like him. He ain't no better than one of these yeggs, and he'd ought to be doing time this minute—" She had to be brought back to the main narrative again.

After some kind of abrupt greeting, Dalton went over to Devitt, who was sitting at his desk, and said something which the stenographer did not catch. She was not listening, being busy, and, as she repeated, accustomed to Dalton's visits which, according to her, only had one object. They talked for a while; once Dalton laughed. After a while Mr. Devitt got up, and she heard the keys jingle when he took them out of his pocket and started to unlock the cash-drawer. That made her look around; she was not frightened, only startled—as she tried to explain—because old Mike had never taken money out of their cash and given it to Dalton right in front of *her*; he always wrote a cheque.

She saw him standing up with his hand in the drawer; Jack Dalton was still sitting on the opposite side of the desk. Devitt said: "It's no use, Jack. I can't do it. That's my answer. Will you go now?"

Dalton grinned and shook his head and said: "Oh, forget it!" or "Oh, can that talk!" or something of that kind.

The other man said again: "It's no use, I tell you. I haven't got it. I can't do it. It's the truth

I'm telling you." Then he stopped for a second, and then said: "Well, if you *will* have it, take it!"

Hilda screamed and ran towards them; but she was too late.

The report rang deafeningly in the room; but, strangely enough, it was not that, but the woman's screams that brought the people. An elevator-boy, the postman, and one of the scrub-women employed in the building were among the first, and all said that they had heard a noise which they supposed to be the back-fire of an automobile somewhere, and that they would have paid no attention, if it had not been for the screaming. As it was, people outside actually knew what had happened before those within and much nearer; for some of the sewing-machine girls in the Wearever Pants Company's workshop on the parallel floor of the power-building across the alley, eating their luncheon by the windows, saw into a part of the room, and it was they who gave the initial alarm, rushing back through their own territory; and somebody turned in the police-call. In five minutes the place boiled with people, the doctor had been sent for, the newspaper-men were gathering. Devitt still stood with the revolver in his hand, and Miss Schloch-termaier, still screaming, was trying to wrest it from him. Dalton lay where he had fallen, his feet tangled in the chair that had gone over with him; the body twitched once or twice, but the shot had been point-blank through the heart, and he must have died instantly. The scrub-woman put her apron over his face.

The police-captain, who knew both men, said: "My God, Mr. Devitt, what you done?"

"He didn't do nothing—he didn't do nothing!"

It was him — it was Jack Dalton!" shrieked Miss Schlochtermailer. "Get that gun away from him!"

Devitt held on to the weapon in spite of her frantic efforts. He said: "Is he dead? I guess I killed him, then."

"He come in here and attackted you — you know he did — you know he did!" Hilda cried out. "I was here — I saw it!" she screamed at the others. "It's Dalton's gun! He'd 'a' killed Mr. Devitt, only he got it off of him! *Dalton* done it, I tell you!"

"I guess I've killed him," Mike repeated.

"He had to — he *had* to! Dalton got mad at somepin' Mr. Devitt says, and went for him with — with that there chair, and he'd 'a' busted his head open — and Dalton a great, big, strong young feller — and *him* an old man —"

"No, no. Jack was near my own age," said Michael Devitt. He looked at the officer and said: "He had me with my back to the wall."

"Don't talk — you hadn't oughta talk —!" said the police-captain hastily. "I got to take you in charge, you know, and afterwards you can tell 'em how it happened —"

"That's right, don't you pay no 'tention to him, off'cer! He ain't right in his head — he ain't respons'ble. I guess I oughta know. I was right here — I *saw* it! He didn't do it — he *had* to do it, he couldn't help himself —!" Miss Schlochtermailer kept on screaming wildly fluent, until the other office-girls got around her and led her away, while the policemen were getting the place cleared.

Some one kindheartedly undertook to break the news to Devitt's wife and son; they took him down to the patrol-wagon. He went very quietly, not

seeming to see or at least to mind the crowd, and not noticing any individuals in it, not even when Kabakoff of the Wearever Pants came rushing up, trying to break through the cordon of police.

"Mr. Devitt, he iss my friendt. We are friends, yass! I know him from 'way back. You let him go home, Mister Cop, yass? I gif you bell for him — look — see —!" yelled Kabakoff excitedly, tears of honest emotion coursing down his Oriental features, the while he brandished a handful of soiled paper currency under the officer's nose. "I go his bell — Mike he iss goot for it — he iss goot man —"

"Sa-ay, you can't get bail for murder," expostulated the captain, backing away from this onslaught. "That ain't the way to do it, anyhow. Don't you know nothing? Sa-ay, keep quiet, now!"

The crowd dispersed; only the reporters trailed the patrol-wagon. One of them, a green hand, would have followed Miss Schlochtermayer, thinking he scented a "story"; but a better seasoned companion dissuaded him. "She'll keep," said he. "They'll screw all she knows out of her. She's just crazy now, trying to lie him out of it, like women do. Let's hop this car. It'll get us up to the jail 'most as soon as they get there."

They hopped it; and, standing on the rear platform, re-discussed the event. "I guess Dalton got *his*, all right," said the older man. "He wasn't any prize citizen."

"Well, he got it good and plenty, anyhow. I never saw anybody dead before — I mean any person that had been killed like that," said the other, with strong distaste.

They were silent a moment, then the senior spoke

with a half-laugh. "Say, did you get the little swede trying to crowd his money on the officer? He thought he could buy Devitt off. I'll bet Ikey wouldn't have done that much for his own mother!"

"He seemed to think a lot of Devitt. I noticed a good many of them did. He's got lots of friends."

"He'll need 'em!" said the other oracularly.

But this sagacious gentleman was mistaken. Old Mike Devitt would never need friends any more. "He didn't say anything," the police-captain explained. "But we didn't think anything of that. Most of 'em go along quietly, because what's the use, hey? Nor he didn't complain of feeling bad; only just before we reached the station he gave a kind of groan, and kind of slumped down this way. And I says: 'Aw, take a brace! *You're* going to be all right!' I says. But I don't believe he heard me. We got the doc right off, soon as he didn't move, and we saw there was something wrong; and he said old Mike was gone already; he went when he give that groan. Heart. He'd had trouble with it, off and on, for years, I been told since. Looks like this last business must have been too much for him."

CHAPTER XIII

PARADISE PARK, despite its exalted name, is an intimate, even domestic place. There is a highly utilitarian pumping-station and reservoir for the city's water-supply in the middle of it, a street-car track traverses it, its borders are encroached upon by unfashionable residences. The elect would smile at the notion of taking outdoor recreation there, though once, we are told, the park was rather the mode for a summer afternoon drive. Nowadays we leave such simple pleasures to the bourgeoisie who take the children to hear the Sunday concerts, and spoon with sweethearts on out-of-the-way benches, and eat luncheons out of shoe-boxes, just as do the other bourgeoisie in other parks all the world over. Yet the park does not lack a charm over and above the flowers and green vistas with which it seeks to vindicate its title; the outlines of its hills are picturesque, and at times it will even take on that look of homely antiquity so dear to the American taste. "If you get the bluff with the engine-house of the Incline perched on the brow of it in profile, it reminds you of the Rhine," Mr. Cook said. "And there's that grand bit of concrete retaining-wall they've built to hold back the hill-side; it looks as if it might be the last remaining fragment of ancient fortifications."

"Yes. Wouldn't that make the basis of a fine story

to tell some uninstructed foreign visitor — from Great Britain, by preference. ‘This is all that is left of the old city-wall, Lord Algernon — erected in Indian days, you know. The Kentuckohis — one of our savage tribes — used to call it in their figurative language Upa-Ga-In-Stit, or Place of Very Bad Medicine.’ ”

“You have concealed from me this talent for romance, Miss Grace. Was that the act of a true friend? ”

Bessie laughed. They were sitting on the brick parapet protecting the road that circles about the rim of the reservoir. The April sun was warm, the ground and air moist with exhaling frost; it spread a kind of blur upon the landscape, dimming the fresh-hued sward and budding trees, and imparting even to the band-stand, and the chimneyed red-brick pumping-house that deceptively time-worn, Old World appearance that Cook had remarked. He had taken off his overcoat and Miss Grace had opened her jacket, which was the exceedingly smart jacket of a new spring suit; her pale gold hair gleamed under a hat heaped with violets; there was a bunch of the real flowers at her waist — Marshall’s offering when he came to take her for this stroll. Neither of them was in the least disturbed about the possibility of being counted with the bourgeoisie. They had been sitting and sauntering this hour in perfect indifference to the opinions of the sophisticated.

“Pretty time of day for you to be finding out the richness of my resources!” Bessie retorted; then added immediately, indeed, rather hurriedly: “It’s very rash to go hurling those crumbs of mortar into the reservoir, Mr. Cook. Besides being bad for the

public health and destructive of the public property, a park policeman might come along and catch you in the act, and hand us both over to the authorities. The least they'd do would probably be to boil us alive in the water we'd contaminated."

Cook who, in fact, had been with a kind of absent industry, mechanically picking loose particles from between the bricks apparently for the purpose of seeing how far he could shy them into the lake, desisted. "I obey," said he; "not because I am convinced or alarmed, but because I like to be bossed — I like *you* to boss me, that is."

And once more Miss Grace spoke with unnecessary haste. "Speaking of women bosses —"

"I wasn't," said Cook.

"Well — I mean — I was thinking about your niece — your niece Mrs. Loring, I mean, of course. I haven't had a chance yet to tell you how well we think she's managing her bureau — at the Charities, you know. Grandmamma is on the Board, and she says Mrs. Loring is invaluable."

Cook made an assenting sound. "Nellie likes it. She seems to have found her place at last, after all her blind blundering. I say: 'all her blundering' as if I knew all about her. Of course I don't. None of us know much about one another. But anybody can see that Nell's marriage was one blunder, at any rate; and nobody ever gets off with only one."

"She and her sister seem to be so happy living together."

"Oh, yes. Poor Fan! She can see a little. It's better than it was at first, but I'm afraid it can't be cured. Still, she's happy. She worships Eleanor — wants everything about the house to be the way

Eleanor likes it, every dish that comes on the table, every curtain and stick of furniture. You'd think she was one of those insanely devoted wives you hear about. And Eleanor reads the paper over the breakfast-table, and goes out to work and comes in again, and settles the bills, for all the world like a man! I believe she, too, is happier than she has ever been in her life."

"It's the independence, I suppose," said Miss Grace. "Do you know," she went on with a slight hesitation; "we — I thought maybe you would have her come and live with you, after the divorce."

"Live with *me*? Nellie?" said the author, evidently considerably startled. "Gracious, no! I'm very fond of her; but *living* with Nell — well, it would be rather like trying to dance the tango in a tray full of red-hot eggs, without burning yourself or breaking any of 'em! No she's a dear, but *living* with her —!" he wagged his head expressively.

"Well, I didn't know — it seemed natural. Isn't it ridiculous how we are all given to planning out other people's lives?"

"It doesn't seem to me ridiculous for you to have given a thought to planning out mine. I — I like — it makes me happy to be told that you —"

For the moment he did not seem able to get any farther, and Bessie precipitately interposed: "Oh, look at the light on those roofs down below there shining through that thin smoke! It gives that very same beautiful antique dinginess you were just talking about —"

"I wasn't," said Cook again. "I haven't talked about that for a half hour. I have been trying all

this while to talk about you and myself — and, Bessie, you won't let me."

Bessie thought: "You never would let yourself before!" And then, to her panicky astonishment, heard her own tongue utter those words without let or hindrance or direction of any sort! Moreover, there must have been some damaging admission or revelation in her tone, for the next instant she was obliged to remonstrate faintly: "Please don't! Somebody might see —"

But Marshall held her hand tight, and got out his three words manfully. . . . "I — I couldn't tell you before, Bessie, I couldn't let myself show it — only I daresay it has always showed in spite of me. But even if I hadn't had my own standards of — of honour and self-respect, I knew what you thought about fortune-hunters —"

"I never thought *you* were one!" cried Bessie. "I wouldn't have thought so even if you — even if you —"

"I couldn't. Any man in my position —! The position isn't so very different now — only — it seems different somehow, since — since — since I've gotten to be better known and — and all that!" said Cook, stammering and colouring painfully. "It's not quite as if I had *nothing* —"

Suddenly Bessie began to laugh, though with a catch like a sob. The pink came back to her cheeks; she looked like a girl. And he thought his heart stopped a beat when he caught her tenderly teasing glance.

"Oh, Marshall, you've done it so badly! You made *such* a bungle of it — and all your heroes make love so beautifully, even the naughty ones!"

After a while they went wandering through the park again.

"I'll have to have an audience with your grandmother," Cook said. "I feel rather in a twitter —"

"Oh, but she likes you!"

"Not any better, I'm afraid, than a dozen better men that have wanted to marry you. Oh, Bessie, how I have raged! And had to make fun of myself all the time! Because there wasn't any use, you see. One might as well make fun. It began the first time I ever saw you, at a party one night. You had on a pink dress. I was quite alone; nobody knew me, not even the hostess! *You* don't remember, I daresay —"

"But I *do*! I remember very well. I think I wasn't very nice to you. I was very young and absurdly bitter the way very young people can be. One never does anything by halves at that age. Oh, yes, I remember!"

They were both silent a little, thinking of the years which they had perhaps wasted. Yet were it all to be lived over, neither one would act otherwise.

"The first thing I do when I'm back in New York will be to go to Tiffany's!" Cook announced suddenly.

She stopped still, looking at him in serious protest. "Why, Marshall, don't do that! I've got such quantities of jewellery — that is —"

"You haven't got a collection of engagement-rings, I hope? At any rate, I'm not going to be done out of the slightest one of my heroes' privileges. I'm going to get a great, staring one like a chunk of glass, in execrable taste. Then I'll know the dream has come true, 'for keeps' —"

They laughed extravagantly, and in the midst of

their laughter, found themselves with further merriment in an unfamiliar neighbourhood, at the head of some steps that dropped down to lower levels still more unfamiliar. The park was somewhere at their backs; but all unwitting, they had emerged from it, and now buildings, intervening, shut it off. Here were cobblestones, houses descending the hill-sides staircase-wise, with cramped, ill-favoured back-yards reticulated with clothesline on the shelves between. But some two squares to their right, the Incline was visible striding down on giant stilts; and Cook, after a survey, pronounced the locality to be Parallel Street, not very far, he thought, from Eddystone Avenue where the freight-yards are.

“Not the choicest spot in town to go walking in!” said he, between amusement and concern. “I haven’t known what I was doing for some time, or we never would have fetched up *here*! However, I won’t let you climb back up hill again. Suppose we valiantly go on down and get the Cherry Street car? It must be somewhere near here; Mercy Hospital’s on one corner, and I think there’s a church somewhere round — they have respectability in the immediate vicinity anyhow!”

They went on down accordingly, and ere long discovered Mercy Hospital, and likewise the church, one consecrated to the worship of the sect of Early Christians, as it appeared from a tablet. Indeed, it would have been difficult to have missed this edifice; outside the United States flag floated from a staff, other flags protruding decoratively from the lancet windows; there were a good many idlers about, none of them looking vividly interested, to be sure, and numbers of children on the steps or performing acrobatically

along the high iron fence. Within, it was evident some sort of exercises were going on; the voice of a single speaker penetrated through the open doors and windows, rising and falling.

“Why, this isn’t at all disreputable!” Bessie murmured disappointedly in Cook’s ear. “You’ve taken me to ever so much worse places than this! Let’s find out what’s happening. There’s a lovely, bleary-eyed gentleman you might ask.”

But this was not necessary; for, coming abreast of the main entrance, they perceived a pair of large white placards disposed, easel-fashion, one on each side of it, lettered in red and black with exhortations to all citizens to Carry on the Fight! “It is Half Done. Make a Good Job of it! Drive the Dirty Doggeries out of Business, and let’s have a Clean Town. No Liquor — No Vice!” Farther down you were reminded that it cost you nothing to come in and be informed; the evils of intemperance were being set forth in three lectures to which admittance was absolutely free. Speakers: Tuesday night, the Honourable Selwyn B. Jukes. Wednesday night, Mrs. Anna Chatt Brangle. Thursday afternoon —

“Who’s this? What do I see?” exclaimed Cook dramatically, fixing his eyeglasses. “Well, well, are there no limits to his abilities? I thought he was a labour-leader!”

Miss Grace suggested that maybe labour-leadering was now out of date, demoded in short. “Why don’t we go in, and hear him on Prohibition? If he’s half as eloquent as he was that night at dinner —!”

So they went in, and were accommodated with seats in a pew near the door, the auditorium being handsomely packed with Early Christians, or others.

And sure enough, there was T. Chauncey Devitt on the platform, dark, graceful, sonorous, delivering sentences and paragraphs and whole pages about the Shadow of the Curse overcoming the Happy Radiance of the Hearth, with interruptions of magnificent applause. He was "swaying the multitude"; a good half of the women were in tears; sometimes there was cheering. Cook and Bessie sat and listened soberly; they did not look at each other.

"He's gettin' near the end now. I c'n gen'lly tell. You'd oughta come in sooner!" a woman sitting next to Miss Grace volunteered in a whisper. "Oh, my!" She settled back, sighing luxuriously, and dabbed at her eyes with a ball of handkerchief.

In fact, Chauncey was getting near the end in easily recognisable style. He had taken up an attitude in the centre of the stage, arms outspread and face raised to Heaven, and was declaiming, almost chanting in measured cadences the noble words of his peroration. Bessie felt a twitch from her companion, and turning was astounded to behold him with his face buried in his hands, and shoulders heaving.

"What's the matter? What *is* the matter?" she whispered urgently; and was relieved when Marshall showed her a corner of his features convulsed indeed, but not by the emotion she had supposed.

"Here, let's get out of this, or we'll be disgraced!" he said between two muffled paroxysms. "C-come on, I c-can't hold in any longer!"

They got outside, the orator's final words pursuing them . . . "but COME what MAY, I will hold the RUDDER TRUE!"

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